DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 362 734 CE 064 799

TITLE	Parents and Children Resource Guide Project: Phase Two.
INSTITUTION	Wisconsin Univ. - Stout, Menomonie. School of Home Economics.
SPONS AGENCY	Wisconsin State Dept. of Public Instruction, Madison.
PUB DATE	30 Jun 92
NOTE	102p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Course Content; *Curriculum Development; *Educational Needs; *Family Environment; *Family Life Education; *Home Economics; *Parent Child Relationship; Secondary Education; Statewide Planning; Well Being
IDENTIFIERS	*Wisconsin

ABSTRACT

This document deals with the need for and suggested content of a Parents and Children course for inclusion in Wisconsin's home economics program. Presented in chapter 1 is a working paper on the nature and significance of continuing concerns of families. It examines the current and desired state of affairs regarding parents and children and gaps between the two. In chapter 2 the rationale for a Parents and Children course is developed in the context of the basic assumptions underlying Wisconsin's education, home economics/home economics education, and family and consumer education programs. Chapter 3 includes several cases illustrating the essential concepts of the proposed course, desired student outcomes, and assumptions about the course's content. Chapter 4 contains the rough draft of a five-module course devoted to the concerns of parents/adults and children within the family and personal settings, environment and community settings, and societal context and public policy arena and actions that individuals and families can take to improve their well-being in these settings/contexts. Appended is a summary of relevant statistical data from recent studies. Contains 59 references. (MN)

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PROJECT REPORT

PARENTS AND CHILDREN RESOURCE GUIDE PROJECT: PHASE TWO

Carl Perkins Vocational Education Funding
September 1, 1991 - June 30, 1992

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A number of individuals contributed to the development of the ideas in this phase of the Resource Guide Project. A special "thank you" is extended to the dedicated teachers on the Advisory Committee who participated in this effort.

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Parents and Children†

CHAPTER I

FAMILY NARRATIVE

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the nature and significance of continuing concerns of families related to parents and children. The broad continuing concern is:

What ought be to done within the family and collectively (on behalf of the family as a social institution) in addressing and solving complex parent/child relations questions that arise in everyday life (in both the private and the public domain)?

(1) **complex parent/child relations questions.** These relation questions require examination from various points of view, in different contexts and with an understanding of the complexity of the particular environment in which they arise. These relations are built upon mutual and reciprocal actions/connections of an ongoing nature and include interpersonal relations as well as interdependent relations with other social groups and the global family.

(2) **within the family and collectively on behalf of the family as a social institution.** This refers to interactions that occur within the individual family context and in the larger context of family as an institution in United States society and globally.

(3) **addressing and solving.** This involves dealing with the continuing concern and coming to a reasoned judgment after studying the context, ends, means, and the possible consequences of the alternatives open in the situation.

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† Working papers in process of being reviewed by *The Parents and Children Resource Guide Advisory Committee*. These papers are not reproduced without permission of the author.

(4) **everyday life.** This involves specific questions that arise in a particular context; a specific set of circumstances in daily life. Everyday life is critically examined in relation to daily problems or concerns and ordinary routines are re–experienced. It is extraordinarily re–experiencing the ordinary (Shor, 1987).

The nature of problems families are facing regarding parents and children is becoming increasingly complex for a variety of reasons. Much is due to the rapidity of societal change and the knowledge explosion, forces which increase uncertainty about what to do in addressing and solving parent/child relations questions.

Family forms and life styles are becoming more varied. This plus the increasingly multicultural mix of ethnic families has led parents and children to question societal norms and to hold conflicting and/or competing values regarding family life.

Furthermore, families are under a great deal of stress economically and politically. The gap between the haves and have-nots is widening and this can readily be seen in the everyday lives of parents and children.

Other social institutions and agencies such as the government, media, schools and child care providers, the workplace, community groups, and the helping professions can provide supportive services to families or intrude upon the everyday lives of individual families. Thus these institutions may disrupt parent/child relations. As a result, agency efforts might promote increasing autonomy and responsibility or they might create increased dependency in the families they are trying to help. Whereas some families feel supported and empowered, others feel as if their parental authority and rights have been undermined/usurped. Many feel overwhelmed and powerless over decisions that affect their lives.

Some families resort to quick fixes in trying to solve everyday parental/child problems. Many families are confused about who to listen to and what to do. They may

lack the insight and thinking processes necessary to deal with the complexities of parent/child relations within the family and in society. Thus, families (individually and collectively) ought to become more deliberate and reasoned in addressing parent/child relations questions. As a first step, this requires a critical understanding of the complex problems they face.

The family narrative provides a description of the broad continuing concern about parent/child relationships including:

An interpretation of context: a description of the current state of affairs, what currently exists in regard to parents and children in the complex relational settings of family and society, including the historical and social aspects that affect the way this concern is defined in a particular situation.

Clarification of valued ends: a description of alternative valued positions and some of the reasons why people might consider each of these valued ends desirable for the family to seek.

Identification of gaps: a description of some of the discrepancies that exist between the present situation regarding parent/child relations and those states of affairs people consider desirable.

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS REGARDING PARENTS AND CHILDREN

This section describes the current state of affairs regarding parents and children. That is, the existing conditions that affect families presently in United States society and the consequences these conditions have for parents and children within the family and collectively on the family as a social institution within society. A thumbnail sketch is

provided for several aspects of context: family, parent resources, parent/child relations, socialization, and knowledge regarding parents and children.

The Family as a Social Institution

There is wide acceptance of the fact that families are changing (Brooks, 1990; Fantini and Cardenas, 1980; Skolnick, 1992; Small and Eastman, 1991). It is difficult to describe with any accuracy the "current state of affairs" of an institution that is in as much state of flux as the contemporary American family. The multiplicity of family forms makes it difficult to even define what constitutes a family. While the trend has been toward acceptance, if not affirmation of diversity, there is no consensus. In fact, the degree of change that has taken place in family forms over the past few decades has been so great that some claim that "the family" as an institution does not exist, that there are only individual families in all of their diversity (Orthner, 1990).

Several trends have contributed to the change in family form. Primary among them are the increased rate of divorce and an increase in births occurring outside of marriage. Together they account for the rise in the number of single–parent families.

Using 1990 U.S. Census figures, we find that the proportion of children under 18 living with only one parent has doubled in the past two decades, from 12% to 25%. The term "single–parent" is somewhat misleading since the over–whelming number of single parents are, in fact, single mothers (87% compared to 13% single fathers) (Current Population Reports, 1991).

The number of remarriages following divorce (while indicating a general optimism on the subject of marriage) has resulted in a large number of blended families with their own unique set of challenges. Divorce ends a marriage but not a family. It dissolves the husband/wife relationship, but not the father/mother, mother/child, or father/child relations (Strong and DeVault, 1992).

Another trend which has had a dramatic impact on the family is the increase in the number of mothers working outside of the home. The most radical increase has occurred among mothers of infants and preschoolers, of whom, 51% and 60%, respectively, are now employed. The two-earner family has become the norm rather than the exception.

While it is a fairly simple matter to determine the contributing factors to the changing family form, it is much more difficult to ascertain the consequences of these changes on family functioning. For example, the increased presence of divorce not only affects the parents and children who actually experience divorce, but also hangs as a possibility over intact families affecting the whole concept of commitment in marriage and the family.

The difficulty in determining the consequences of change is perhaps more clearly illustrated by the changing role of women over the past quarter century. The fact that women's entry into the workforce coincided with the decline of the traditional nuclear family has been the basis for much polarization in the public debate regarding the family. Those who view the nuclear family of the 50's as ideal are quick to associate its decline with negative consequences for children. Those who view the "Ozzie and Harriet" family as repressive tend to see the newly gained independence and status of women as beneficial to the family and as an impetus toward more egalitarian relations.

It is unlikely that there will be consensus on many of these issues, but there does seem to be some convergence of opinion. In his introduction to *Rebuilding the Nest*, David Blankenhorn (1990) points out three particular areas of agreement among the contributors to the book who otherwise present diverse opinions on the state of well-being of the American family.

1. As a social institution, the family in America is increasingly less able to carry out its basic functions.
2. The quality of life for America's children is declining.

3. Our family dilemma is not simply one of public policy or economics but is also one of cultural values and social institutions. (p. xiv)

Since the United States society is made up of families of different cultural, racial and ethnic heritages, are there any values that parents see as characteristic of strong families? A study of ethnic parents (Native American, Hmong, African American and Chicano with a white comparison group), responded to written questionnaires and personal face–to–face interviews concerning characteristics that promote a strong, healthy families. The most striking finding was the consensus among all five ethnic groups on those qualities that were considered most important to family functioning. These parents felt that the top four qualities of healthy families were that the family (1) communicates and listens, (2) is trusting and trustworthy, (3) is affirming and supportive, and (4)teaches a sense of right and wrong. The fifth quality, teaching respect for others, was a top five selection by all groups except the Hmong, who valued family traditions as the fifth-most important family quality. Other commonalities of qualities valued were that the family: respects the privacy of family members, spends time doing things together, and feels a sense of shared responsibility for family welfare (Abbott and Meredith, 1988).

Level of Parental Resources

In addition to changes in family structure, concomitant changes in parental resources have added to the stress of families. Resources are limited; we each have just so much time, money, physical and emotional energy, knowledge and skill to be divided among our various responsibilities. To some extent the availability or lack of resources has contributed to the changes in family form. Note to reader: See discussion of existing knowledge and experts below.

One of the most obvious examples is money. The need for additional family income is one of the major reasons for the increase in two-earner families. In turn, this change has

resulted in a decrease, or more accurately a reallocation, of other resources, notably parental time and energy. As employment demands increase, there is usually less time and energy to devote to children and family activities. Skolnick (1992) points out that building careers and raising families are often at odds.

Single–parent families are particularly vulnerable to the effects of limited resources. It is almost axiomatic that if two–parent families are having difficulty finding enough time, money, and energy to go around, it is all the more difficult for the single–parent family. Statistics illustrate the economic gap that exists between two–parent and single–mother families. See Table I.

Table I

Children, Their Families and Economic Conditions

	Whites	Black	Hispanics
Children living with two parents [1]	79%	38%	67%
Children living with one parent [1]	19%	55%	30%
Children living below poverty line [2,3]	15%	45%	48%
Median family income two parents [1]	$39,208	$30,650	$27,382
One parent (mother headed)	$14,864	$11,630	$ 9,525

1 = Current Population Reports, 1991.
2 = Black Population in the United States, 1988.
3 = Hispanic Population in the United States, 1990.

In dual employed families and single-parent employed families, adult caregivers outside the family are a resource, playing a role in family life. These adult caregivers become an "extended family" to the child. Infants and preschoolers spend much of their waking hours with these adults. Teachers in school are also a resource in the support they provide to the child and the family.

Also in the realm of resources, is the discrepancy between the value this country says it places on children, "children are our most precious resource," and what we actually do in support of children and parent/child relations. Approximately 20% of children live in

conditions below the poverty line. Young families with children are the poorest segment of the population.

The (perceived) needs of families with children and non-parents differ as well as their amount of disposable income and resources. Because of this, the economic resource gap between families with children and others in society will probably continue to widen.

Parent/Child Relations

With the changes in family forms and the mobility of families in pursuit of employment, disruption in the continuity of relations can occur. According to Urie Bronfenbrenner (1976), "A number of developments—many themselves beneficent—have conspired to isolate the family and to reduce drastically the number of relatives, neighbors and other caring adults who used to share in the socialization of American children." Among the most significant forces he mentioned were occupational mobility, the breakdown of the neighborhoods, the separation of residential from business areas, separate patterns of social life for different age groups and the delegation of child care to outside institutions (Bronfenbrunner, 1986). "What today's parents lack is a support system" (Berns, 1985, p. 105).

The continuity of the father role is closely related to the success of the marriage relationship in our contemporary society. Some people would say that the father in our society is allowed to function in his role only if his marriage remains intact. As previously stated, fathers gain custody of the children 13% of the time. According to one study, approximately 40% of adolescents from divorced families continue to have contact with the noncustodial parent (McLoughlin and Whitfield, 1984).

Studies on the consequences of the absence of the father are few, especially for adolescents. There are differences based on the gender of the adolescent. For example, adolescent girls experience a more difficult relationship with their custodial parent (who

is usually the mother) than boys. Overall, adolescents whose parents divorce (most live with their mother) often experience some problems with personal identity; fears of being abandoned, rejected, and unloved; fears of failure in their own future marriages; and may experience delinquent behaviors (Bigner, 1989).

Parents and children in today's American society spend decades of life together, with a growing number of them having 50 years or more of shared lives. Parents and children not only share more life years together than ever before, they also increasingly find themselves part of an intergenerational context that includes multiple parent–child links (Hagestad, 1987). Four generation families are now common. However, most people think of "child" in a chronological sense, not as a family role that one has as long as one has a surviving parent (ex. a 70 year old child who is retired). Many middle aged and retired children look out for or provide care for an older parent or grandparent as well as show concern for and perhaps provide direct aid for their adult children, grandchildren and perhaps great grandchildren. As health begins to fail, as the older person becomes more dependent, and as the demands on the middle generation increase, relations and communications may become more tense. The generations in the middle often are giving help and nurturing both the oldest and youngest generations. In this sense, parent/child relations are becoming even more complex than ever before. Furthermore, good parent/child communications are becoming even more essential (Hamner and Turner, 1990).

Expectations Regarding Socialization

Socialization is defined as the process by which children and adults learn behaviors that are culturally appropriate for people of their age and sex (Lefrancois, 1990). This process is one in which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and

dispositions that enable them to participate as more or less effective members of groups and society (Berns, 1985).

Childhood/Adulthood

Confusion exists in our society about the timing, duration and scope of childhood and adulthood, and thus we hold inconsistent and conflicting views of the socialization process. Some authors say that childhood is prolonged in contemporary society (Skolnick, 1992). They argue that childhood extends until the child leaves the home, becomes economically self-supporting and financially independent. Some people say that they did not really feel like an adult until they got married. Many first–time parents comment that one becomes an adult when one has their first child (whether they are 15 or 40). The law in most states indicates that a person is a child until age 18 and that their parents are still legally and financially responsible for them. However, young people have to wait until age 21 to vote, a right of adult citizens.

Others argue that childhood is disappearing. Distinctive forms of children's dress, and children's games are disappearing (Postman, 1982). Children dress like fashion models and adults dress like youngsters. Children's games such as baseball, football and basketball become competitive and only the best players get to play on Little League, middle school and high school teams. Some parents hold their sons back from attending kindergarten so that they will be bigger and stronger and thus more likely to be able to compete well on the athletic fields and in the classroom. Today's children are being exposed to all sorts of information from which they were previously shielded according to Postman (1982) and Elkind (1984). For example, children are being educated at younger and younger ages to protect themselves from sexual abuse (preschool/elementary levels), and AIDS (elementary) (Elkind, 1992).

Adulthood in terms of work and responsibilities is coming sooner and sooner. Many children do in fact care for younger siblings and/or their own parents, who may not be

able to fulfill their parenting role. That is, children are being forced into parenting their parents or siblings (an adult role). As Elkind, (1984) states, "... they have a premature adulthood trust upon them" (p. 3). One effect of premature adulthood is stress which can be seen in terms of substance abuse, sexual abuse, suicide rates and crime rates (Elkind, 1984).

Historical Influences

A variety of factors influence the context of the relations between parents and children. History has influenced the meanings people hold about parent/child relations and the family's role in the nurturance and socialization of children.

Attitudes toward children have changed historically and this is reflected in their treatment. De Mause (1975) traced six historical trends in the treatment of children in Western civilization. Briefly these are as follows:

1. In antiquity, there was little evidence of strong parental attachment. Occasional infanticide was socially acceptable.
2. In the Middle Ages, poverty and emotional indifference lead to widespread abandonment of infants. Also there were very high infant mortality rates.
3. The Renaissance was basically a period of ambivalent attitudes toward children.
4. During the industrialization of the eighteenth century, children became like chattel. That is, they were used for economic gain as manual laborers in factories, mines and shops.
5. The nincteenth century saw continued flourishing of child labor. However, it was the beginning of increasing concern for the plights of children and important educational changes.
6. In the industrialized world of the twentieth century, there is concern for the plights and rights of children. However, there are still instances of abuse and higher infant and child morality rates than necessary.

Whereas De Mause outlined attitudes toward the treatment of children, Berns (1985) divided history into four eras and then conceptualized socialization skills essential for the particular era and the role of the family in this socialization process during each of the eras. Berns outlined four eras of history related to families and society: hunting, agricultural, industrial and information. In early history, nuclear families survived based upon their ability to hunt, fish, gather and herd. Families were small and very mobile, moving from place to place in search of food. Socialization skills essential for survival included self–reliance, independence and adaptability. Parents taught life skills to the children to meet their basic physical needs (survival).

In agricultural based societies, extended families survived based on their ability to grow food. Families were larger with perhaps several generations living together or nearby. Socialization skills essential for survival included physical strength, self–sufficiency, deference to elders, and responsibility to one's family.

In industrial (manufacturing) based societies, nuclear families survived based on their ability to secure and keep jobs in factories. Sometime prior to the Industrial Revolution, families became smaller and the nuclear family was the norm. Parents and eventually schools taught survival skills to children.

These included hard work, ability to fit into an organization, deferral of gratification, thrift, education and having a trade or craft. Children were taught to be obedient, to show deference to the authority in charge, to subordinate individual rights for the greater benefit of the organization, to think in an either/or mode, and to think of short term considerations. In terms of power and politics, power was unidirectional, top-down, and democracy was representative when it occurred. However, not all groups were given democratic rights e.g., women, ethnic groups and racial minorities.

In information based societies, families survive based on their ability to process and work with information. Families are smaller and come in many forms. Skills essential to

survival include knowledge, adaptability, high–tech skills, acceptance of responsibility, working well with others, and technical problem-solving ability. Parents, schools and child care providers teach an ever-expanding set of survival skills to children. Children are taught to delay gratification, be flexible, seek meaning from work, network, seek multiple options, be internally oriented, seek socially responsible work, and think of long range considerations. In terms of power and politics, participatory democracy and decentralization are sought.

Existing Knowledge and Experts

Knowledge refers to working knowledge consisting of intellectual and social skills including a more specific knowledge base related to parenting. These resources are used in creating home environments. The current lack of such skills and knowledge by many parents points out the need for support: time, energy, attention.

Many have believed that parenting behavior, particularly "maternal love," is instinctive — that mothers naturally have not only the knowledge and skills but the need to care for children (Elkind, 1992). Historical and sociological evidence suggest that this is not the case. The model parent in Puritan colonial times was one who regularly "beat the devil" out of the child (McCoy, 1981). Today this behavior is considered a serious problem. These examples of the treatment of children throughout history hardly suggest the existence of innate knowledge and skill on the part of parents.

Parent/child relations have been influenced by the media and the experts over time. Advice given to parents in the popular literature has varied widely from 1890 to the present (Bigner, 1989). This contributes to the confusion of parents about what to do in parent–child interaction. For example, from 1890 to 1920 considerable immigration occurred with parents teaching their children to take advantage of the numerous opportunities for personal advancement. Also, the use of children in the labor force

increased dramatically with the expanding industrial economy. Toward the end of this period child labor laws were enacted because of an increased concern with the health and welfare of children.

This period of restrictive advice continued to be in vogue until the middle 1930's when the trend was again reversed, urging parents to be less restrictive and more child oriented in caring for their children. Whereas the 1920's and 1930's were known as the parents' decade, from 1935–45 was the baby's decade. Advice given by writers concerning the rearing of children advocated a mental health approach, emphasizing the child's emotional adjustment within the first five years of life. The 1950's to 1970's were again the parents' era with parents being urged to recognize their own individuality within their role in shaping a child's development (Bigner, 1989).

LeMasters and DeFrain (1983) stated the following: "Parents and children are so immersed in messages from the mass media that they are scarcely aware of it" (p. 11). These authors were referring primarily to television but also included movies, advertising and other media. It does appear that the media frequently espouse values that conflict with parental values, especially in the area of sex, drugs, violence, materialism, and hedonism (LeMasters & DeFrain, 1983)

One of the most significant effects of television and video on parenting is the amount of time they consume in many families, resulting in a decreased amount of time spent in interaction with children (Hamner and Turner, 1990). Bronfenbrenner (1970) commented that "turning on the television set can turn off the process that transforms children into people." Bronfenbrenner elaborated further: "The primary danger of the television screen lies not so much in the behavior it produces — although there is danger there — as in the behavior it prevents: the talks, the games, the family festivities and arguments through which much of the child's learning takes place, and through which his character is formed."

Knowledge and lack of knowledge influences parent–child interaction in terms of parental expectations. Teenagers — both parents and nonparents — have unrealistic expectations of young children according to De Lissovoy (1973). For example, he found that many of the teenagers thought that babies should sit alone at 3 months of age and be toilet trained by age 6 months. Teenage parents' unrealistic expectations frequently led to child abuse because they believed that their child was deliberately misbehaving.

Summary of Current Situation

- One of the challenges to Wisconsin families is that we live in an information age in which remnants of the agricultural and industrial ages, and the attitudes and values connected with these eras, persist. This leads to inner conflicts, conflicts between parents, and conflicts between generations.
- The trend in reallocation of resources and increased emphasis on the individual over the past several decades seems to be toward investment in oneself rather than family. Personal fulfillment has achieved a status equal to, if not exceeding, that of parenting.
- Due to mobility and changing family forms, there is less support for parenting that has traditionally come from "relatives, neighbors and other caring adults."
- Due to the high divorce rates, there is often a subsequent decrease in frequency of father–child interaction following divorce in families where the mother receives custody.
- Due to societal changes impacting on parents and children, changes in family structure are inevitable. Both traditional family forms and new family forms will exist.

- Changes in family structure mean that more people are involved in the parenting of children: stepparents, non–custodial parents, child care providers, teachers, older siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents and great grandparents, in some cases.
- Even though cultural and ethnic diversity exist among United States families, there are some common values related to family life and children.
- Young families with children are the poorest segment in society. This is more often the case if it is mother–headed single parent family with children.
- Potential parents and parents lack information about normal growth and development patterns of children.
- Parent — child relations are being affected by changes in definitions of both adulthood and childhood.
- Social change increases the likelihood that potentials for conflicts inherent in parent — child relations will emerge in consciousness and behavior.
- Parents are confused about how to help children and adolescents prepare for the future as a result of rapid social and cultural change and the multiple and competing sources of information and values within our society.
- The proliferation of media reports about families, parents, children and increasing numbers of parenting "experts" leads to confusion about what is best for parents and children and what sources of knowledge and information are valid.
- Parents and children live in an intergenerational context with multiple parent–child links which may include four or more generations. Middle generations often look out for and care for the youngest and oldest dependent family members.

STATES OF AFFAIRS CONSIDERED DESIRABLE

This section defines states of affairs considered desirable in terms of alternative views related to well–being. That is, alternative valued ends are sought by persons who hold different views of what should happen regarding parent/child relations within the family and on behalf of families within society. These alternative ends will be sketched out/delineated in terms of three value positions. These three value positions indicate some of the characteristics and processes representative of the alternate ends. Differences in valued ends are outlined in the following framework in terms of goal(s) sought, view of the people involved, the environments and the type of interaction postulated between the people and the environment.

What alternative valued ends do families seek/hold regarding the well–being of parents and children? See Table II.

The training view, which is based on behaviorist theory, is shown in column one of Table II. The goal is to socialize children to meet societal expectations, parenting as unidirectional and parents being solely responsible for their children. Nurturing is viewed as natural. Efficiency in socialization is seen as a high priority.

The personal development view, which is based on self theory, is shown in column two of Table II. The goal is to foster the full development of the child. Parents are to promote the child's development and to protect the child from society. Individual development of the child is of utmost importance and the child is seen as active in constructing meaning.

The educative view, which is based on cognitive developmental theory, is shown in column three of Table II. The goal is to develop future family member citizens who are critical thinkers, can critique society and take reasoned action on behalf of families

individually and collectively. Parents and children are seen as interacting and influenced by and influencing society.

Table II

What alternative valued ends do families seek/hold regarding the well–being of parents and children?

Behavioral Theory or Training View	Self Theory or Personal Development View	Cognitive Developmental Theory or Educative View
GOAL SOUGHT		
To train/socialize children/dependent person to meet societal expectations. Successful training leads to efficient, smooth–running families/society. There is no need to question the valued ends of society.	To focus on the uniqueness of the individual (child and parent/adult) and the development of full human potential.	To develop future family members and citizens who are autonomous critical thinkers who can critique society, and take reasoned action in a democratic society.
Behavioral Theory or Training View	**Self Theory or Personal Development View**	**Cognitive Developmental Theory or Educative View**
VIEW OF PEOPLE		
Child — A child is to be trained, molded and shaped to meet the expectations of society. The child is viewed as empty and needing to learn (empty vessel).	The child is an unfolding flower with many potentials. Growth occurs from inward out. The child's self concept is an important factor in the ability to learn. The child makes own meanings and is seen as active in constructing their own world and making choices.	A child learns through interaction with those parents/adults and children in an environmental context. The child's stage of development influences learning. The parents' level of development influences the child's development.
Parent/Adult — Parents are adult and therefore quite stable developmentally.	The child is the center and the parent's role is to foster the child's uniqueness and full development of their own potential.	Parents/adults are undergoing developmental changes and these changes influence their interaction with children.
Parents are solely responsible for their children and are responsible for the mistakes they make.	The child is responsible ultimately for own self.	Families and collectively all families (society) are responsible for the welfare and well–being of children.

Table II (continued)

Behavioral Theory or Training View	Self Theory or Personal Development View	Cognitive Developmental Theory or Educative View
ENVIRONMENT		
The home is a training ground for learning the norms and expectations of society.	The home is a haven and a retreat from society. Parents are to protect/counteract the effects of society.	Home is influenced by and influences society. Society should be supportive of parents so that the work of the family can be carried out within and on behalf of families.
The norms of society are accepted regarding parenting. These are based on commonly accepted societal expectations of what is a "good" child, parent/adult.	Socialization according to norms of society interferes with individuation of the person; therefore societal norms are de-emphasized or disregarded.	The norms of society are examined and questioned in relation to the specific parenting situation or issues of concern to a family as a social institution.
Norms are static and should remain stable.	Environments that foster interpersonal communication and creating personal meanings are paramount. Personal values and standards are individually created.	Examination of societal norms is desirable and may lead to changes in family members, in the family and public policy.
Society determines what is "good." (Them)	Individual determination of "good." (Me)	Aware participation within individual families and families within society in determining "good." (Us)
Fulfillment through achieving goals that society determines.	Fulfillment through personal individual goals.	Fulfillment through balancing individual/family/community/societal goals based on what is "good" for all involved.

Table II (continued)

Behavioral Theory or Training View	Self Theory or Personal Development View	Cognitive Developmental Theory or Educative View
VIEW OF INTERACTION (Between Family Member and Environment)		
Parenting as an individual family enterprise.	Parenting as an individual family enterprise.	Parenting as both a family and collective enterprise. (moral)
View of parenting as authoritarian. This is a highly controlling, obedience–oriented parenting style in which there is little recourse to reasoning and no acceptance of the child's autonomy. Standards are based on commonly held beliefs (Baumrind, 1966).	View of parenting as permissive. This is a parenting style that may be characterized as "laissez–faire." Permissive parents are nonpunitive and undemanding. Children regardless of developmental level are autonomous rather than obedient, and thus are responsible for their own decisions and actions (Baumrind, 1966).	View of parenting as authoritative. This is a moderately controlling parenting style in which value is placed on developing independence and reasoning, but where parents impose some regulations and controls allowing for rational discussion of standards and expectations. Standards are based on reason.
Nurturing occurs mainly from parents/parent surrogates to children.	Nurturing is natural and instinctive.	Nurturing is learned through interaction.
	Nurturance is allowing the child to unfold own uniquely individual qualities.	Nurturing occurs both within the family and beyond the boundaries of the family.
Parenting is unidirectional. Parents affect children.	Non–directive, laissez–faire parenting allows for the child to examine own feelings, thoughts and for self–expression (Brown, 1978).	Parenting is interactional. Parent changes child. Child changes parent and parenting.
Parents seek to control children. (power over)	Unidirectional power from child to parent. (power over)	Parents and children seek balance in power and equity in relationships depending on the developmental level of each. (power with and power to)

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Table II (continued)

Behavioral Theory or Training View	Self Theory or Personal Development View	Cognitive Developmental Theory or Educative View
VIEW OF INTERACTION (Between Family Member and Environment) (continued)		
Socialization is training. It is unidirectional from parents to children.	Society should not be allowed to hamper this development. Society is a rich resource to draw upon to foster the child's potential.	Socialization is bidirectional. Parental action influences child development. Children change/influence parents.
Efficiency is training/socialization of children valued.	Full development of the child is most important. Parents subordinate themselves to their children.	Full development of individual family members and the family as a whole are valued.
There are child rearing techniques that will work for parents if they just can find the right ones. Rely on experts. Answers are generalized.	Each child is unique and the child rearing techniques need to foster the child's autonomy.	Parent/child situations and issues are unique and depend on the context: people involved, the quality of individual's relationships, levels of development, communication skills, ability to engage in complex thinking and take reasoned action. Actions are specific to a particular situation and cultural context.

These three alternative views are reflected in contemporary family action, that is, actions taken within the family and collectively on behalf of the family as a social institution in U.S. society. In families whose members lack conceptual maturity, complex value questions about parent/child relations are reduced to technical questions. Distorted communications and repressive forms of authority are not questioned.

In families whose adult members are sufficiently mature, alternative valued ends are critically examined and justified in terms of relevance, adequacy and coherence. This involves communicative and reflective action. Claims about what is true or right are supported or refuted by giving reasons in discussion between two or more people. Reasons are considered in a fair and open-minded way so that what is agreed upon is based on reason. It is through communicative action that reasoning capacities, social feeling about oneself, and reciprocal relations and fair mindedness develop. To the degree

that ends are based on illusions or false interpretations of parent/child relations, reflective action is needed to expose, refute and change self-defeating patterns of thinking. The cognitive developmental or educative view seems most consistent with this approach.

The viewpoint taken in this document is that parent/child relations that are considered desirable are those which help each family member to grow toward self–formation (i.e. attainment of maturity, autonomy, responsibility, and growth toward one's fullest potential) and societal formation (Brown, 1978). The valued end is the development of family members who are nurturing, thoughtful and reflective about their individual, family and societal attitudes, behaviors, commitments and responsibilities. They can use what they have learned in autonomous, critical thinking, problem–solving and action within the family and on behalf of families in a democratic society.

To reach these valued ends, other instrumental values are applied. Instrumental values describe the means upheld as important to attaining the end values, or outcomes sought. As a place to start, Bronfenbrenner (1990) has delineated several instrumental values consistent with a critically reflective outcome in the family setting, near environment/community setting and the societal/public setting.

Family Setting

1. To develop, a child needs to participate in a strong, enduring emotional relationship with one or more caring individuals over an extended period of time, preferably life. This series of interactions develops into a more complex relation over the years. In short, the child needs someone who has a deep caring intense emotional involvement, someone who is "crazy" about this particular child and is his/her life–long advocate.

   The child needs a parent/adult who is committed to and takes action on behalf of the child's well–being and development (physically, socially, emotionally,

intellectually and morally). In the case of most children, these deeply caring individuals would be their parent(s).

If the child has such a strong positive progressive mutual relationship with parent(s)/adults, then the child is more responsive to physical, social and symbolic (language) environment. This environment, in turn, helps to accelerate the child's growth psychologically and socially.

2. The complex interaction and emotional attachment between the child and parent is dependent to a large extent on the availability and involvement of a third party. The third party assists, encourages, takes over, gives status to, and expresses admiration for the person caring for and engaging in joint activity with the child. This most frequently occurs within the family setting.

   The third party is often the other parent (step-parent), but is frequently another relative (older sibling, aunt, uncle, cousin, grandparent, great-grandparent) or close family friend. Again, it is important that the commitment of the third party to the child and parent/adult is ongoing over an extended period of time.

Near Environment/Community Setting

3. "In order to develop physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially, and morally, a child needs the enduring involvement of one or more adults in progressively more complex activity" (Bronfenbrenner, 1985, p. 47). This person values the child and works for (nurtures) the child's development in a fair, rational manner. Most often this person is the child's teacher, child care provider or coach.
4. Support is needed by the child and family from the near environments and community settings, such as schools, child care settings, the parents' workplace and the neighborhood. This requires ongoing patterns of communication, mutual

accommodations and mutual trust between the principal settings in which the child and the parent(s) live their lives. Families need to take action and to be supportive of programs that foster positive environments to meet the changing needs of families.

Societal/Public Setting

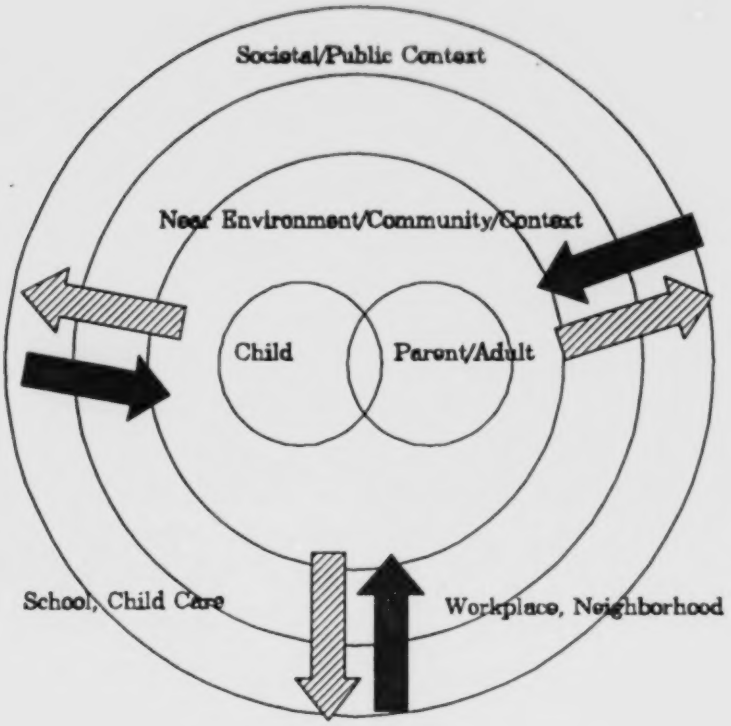
5. In addition, public support is needed for child-rearing processes in the family and other principal settings in the form of public policies and practices that provide place, time, stability, recognition, belief systems, and actions in support of child-rearing activities. This requires examination of major economic, social and political institutions of the entire society in terms of policies supportive of children, parents and families.

In summary, parent–child relations are embedded in a specific family with other members of different ages and the family lives in a social and cultural context that in turn exerts an influence on the family. The parent–child dyad is thus nested in a social group that expands as the child grows and comes into contact with adult caregivers outside the family, the school, neighborhood and community. The parents are influenced by these and their workplace and network of friends (Lerner and Lerner, 1985).

On a societal level collectively parents/adults can correct public policy which can be supportive of children and families. See Figure 1 for a graphic illustration of this model.

Figure 1

Family Context



The role of "parenting" (both individually and collectively) should be given high priority. The future of our nation and society depends on the quality of the citizens. As members of society we all have responsibilities as "parents" individually and collectively for the full development of children and all family members.

GAPS

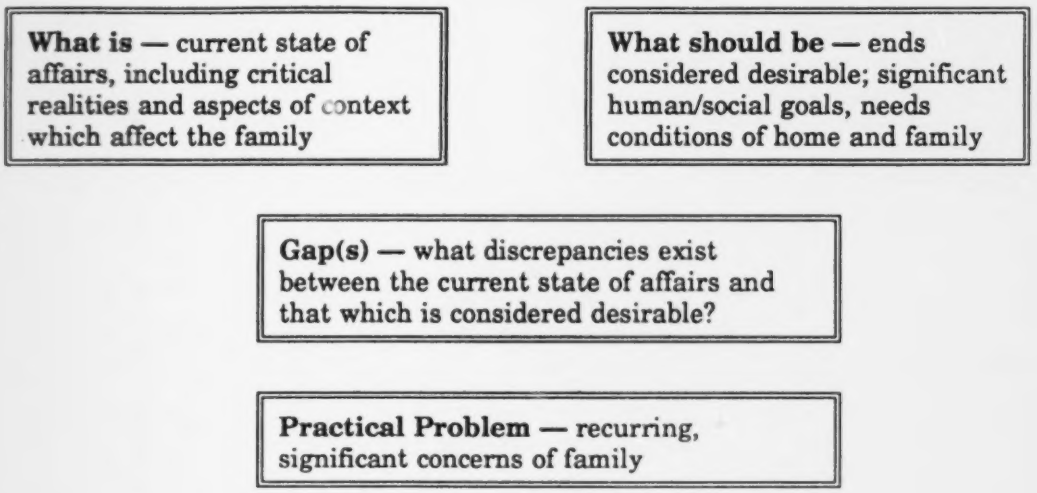
A gap is the opening or breach between what is considered ideal (what is conceptualized as right to do for other people) and what currently exists. Gaps are identified as a result of discrepancy analysis between the current state of affairs and that which is considered desirable. See Figure II for a discrepancy analysis graph developed by Strom (1988). There are two types of gaps included in this section: moral/political gaps and intellectual gaps.

Moral/Political Gaps

Moral refers to what is right to do in relation to other people (rights or beneficence). Political refers to what affects people's access to goods and services and to decision–making powers (Goldenberg, 1978).

Moral/political gaps refer to discrepancies that exist between what is and what ought to be that have significant consequences in people's lives and in societal formation. Matters related to parents and children thus meet the criteria of being moral/political. Moral matters are addressed by (1) taking into account the consequences of actions on all interested persons involved directly or indirectly by a situation and (2) by evaluating beliefs and practices to find those with the most positive consequences for the most people (Scriven, 1972). Political matters are related to public affairs and policies at the community, state or national levels and has to do with power. The three dimensions of moral/political gaps identified include: nurturance, economic and social responsibleness.

Figure 2: Discrepancy Analysis*


What is — current state of affairs, including critical realities and aspects of context which affect the family
What should be — ends considered desirable; significant human/social goals, needs conditions of home and family
Gap(s) — what discrepancies exist between the current state of affairs and that which is considered desirable?
Practical Problem — recurring, significant concerns of family

* Process of inquiry for identifying enduring problems in a topic area. S. Strom 6/88, Pilot Sch Wkshp.

Dimension of Moral/Political Gap: Nurturance

We take for granted that most parents do a good job nurturing their children. In society today we believe that love facilitates nurturant behavior (love both parent → child and child → parent). However, love can also be too little, too much, or even misguided love (i.e. self–gratification, living our life through our child, sexual love). Many contextual societal factors such as stress associated with jobs (or lack of), social pressures, poverty, or other relationships and roles may hinder nurturant parenting. Furthermore, contextual factors can block nurturance (Example: such as taking care of one's parents at the same time as parenting one's children or taking care of a dependent child at the same time as a dependent spouse).

The desire to have a child is more cultural than instinctual. Parents may feel a intense desire to have a child, then find that nurturant behavior is neither natural nor easily learned. The desire feels natural, e.g. "biological clock," and one might assume that parenting ability would naturally follow. But if indeed, the desire to have a child is more

a cultural phenomenon than "instinctual" or biological, then nurturant parenting behavior will also need to be learned.

There are many contextual factors that block the nurturing a parent can do (i.e. stress, physical and mental health, demands of career/job, caring for other children, caring for dependent adults such as own parents or a dependent spouse). Individuals differ in their ability to deal with stress. For example, some parents deal with stress in healthful ways such as using time management techniques, practicing good nutrition, and developing a social support system while others even create more stress by excessive drinking, physical violence or failure to set priorities. Likewise, the mental and physical health of parents vary which in turn influences their ability to nurture. Employment demands on a single parent or two parents often require that others be included in caring for the child such as child care providers, an older sibling, or neighbor during the absence of the parent. The nurturing ability of a parent who is caring for an elder parent or a dependent spouse at the same as raising children can be over taxed.

Historical and sociological evidence suggests that nurturant parenting is not natural/innate (McCoy, 1981). For example, there have been dramatic historical changes in attitudes toward the value of children, i.e. infanticide. Attitudes have ranged from economics asset to the emotional value of children as the family moved through the agricultural and industrial eras to the information era. The average number of children born to white women from 1800–1982 dropped from 7 to 1.8. However, people continue to value children even though the economics have changed. "In the modern world, children have an emotional and symbolic value to their parents that has no relation to practical economics" according to Skolnick (1992, p. 337).

The human infant comes into the world the most helpless of all primates. They need considerable care and nurturance to thrive and develop. In addition, they need to learn

about the world of meanings, concepts and significant symbols (language). This requires reciprocal interaction between the parent or caregiver and the child.

It is hard for us to imagine that the emotional value we place on children is more a product of culture than biology. That is, we have learned these emotional values rather than been born with these instinctive values.

Despite the burden that children represent in objective terms (physical, emotional and financial) only 4% of Americans had no children and were glad of it (Gallop and Newport, 1990).

Nurturant "parenting" behavior on the part of society is lacking.

**Lack of understanding personally and societally that nurturance may not be natural and provided for in society.	——————➢ ——————➢	Recognition that nurturance is learned recognition that society must foster/support the conditions supporting nurturant relations

Dimension of Moral/Political Gap: Economic

Financial resources often translate into the amount of control one has over everyday choices or degrees of freedom (number of options available). Choices and options relate to "power to": (1) obtain essential goods and services, and (2) make decisions affecting one's life. Thus, self determination of individuals and families is influenced by financial resources. Day to day interactions between parent and child often are more influenced by those everyday choices than lofty ideals regarding parenting. Poverty drastically limits options. Even if basic needs are provided at a minimum level, the frustration of not being able to provide/do more can affect parenting and parent/child relations. At the other end, one must remember that being a slave to acquisition of money also results in less freedom and fewer options to the detriment of parent/child relations.

The gap is widening between the haves and the have nots both in terms of economics and in terms of attitudes and beliefs which may exacerbate this problem. While it would be dangerous and inaccurate to equate parenting adequacies or inadequacies with the availability of financial resources, it is hard to ignore the fact that money can buy certain things that we associate with "good parenting" such as provision of food, nutrients, shelter, health care, safety, education, etc. for physiological and psychological growth.

**Less freedom/few options	——————➤	more freedom/more options
**Less control over everyday choices	——————➤	more control over everyday choices

Dimension of Moral/Political Gap: Social Responsibleness

Preoccupation with individualism could turn to selfishness. Bellah (1991) indicates that the market model of maximizing self interest is not appropriate for democracy, marriage, or parenting. We need a common sense of public virtue and to be educated to be "good." Thinking of other people is a "good" responsibility. Common good is the "good" we seek in common as a society, that is, taking into account what is in the best interests of all persons involved. "It includes everything from adequate public facilities to the trust and civic friendship that makes public life something to be enjoyed rather than feared" (Bellah, 1985, p. 335). Family members need to become involved in issues from the neighborhood level to the world level. The challenge becomes taking action to recreate a sense of community with a moral foundation. A common sense of public virtue needs to be established in order to avoid preoccupation with individualism that can turn to selfishness.

**From rugged individualism	——— ➢	to sense of common good
**From individuals focused on own needs exclusively and avoiding society	——— ➢	to individuals linking to society
**From inattentiveness to needs of children and others	——— ➢	attentiveness to needs of children and others (immediate and long–term)

Intellectual Gaps

Intellectual gaps are the discrepancies between what is and what ought to be that arise due to lack of knowledge or skill. There are two types of intellectual gaps: those due to lack of a knowledge base and those due to lack of intellectual/social processes.

Individuals who lack a knowledge base do not have sufficient working knowledge to take reasoned action. Working knowledge is "information that helps us to understand how to act effectively in our own lives" (Egan and Cowan, 1979, p. 33). Working knowledge in this resource guide is the knowledge necessary to address and solve parent/child relations questions which currently present developmental challenges to children and parents/adults and for deep understanding of the concepts of childhood, adulthood and the conditions that foster full human development within familial and societal settings.

Individuals who lack intellectual processes do not have sufficient intellectual and social skills to take reasoned action based on mutually defined values and goals. Intellectual skills are the critical thinking and social interaction skills that enable persons to take communicative, critical reflective, and technical actions in the family (Brown, 1980). The goal is to develop children and adults who are fair minded in a "strong sense"; who, regardless of their developmental levels, use critical thinking skills in the service of

balanced truth, rationality, autonomy and self–insight to address and solve continuing concerns of family (Paul, 1990).

"Communicative actions help families identify and explore meanings, intentions and standards that underlie action and language" (*A Guide to Curriculum Planning in Home Economics*, 1987, p. 57). Concept analysis, concept development and generating conceptual complexity are examples of intellectual skills leading to communicative actions (cooperatively constructing mutually acceptable meaning and norms) (*A Guide to Curriculum Planning in Home Economics*, 1987, p. 62).

Reflective actions are those which help family members as a whole to identify unconsciously developed and taken–for–granted concepts that may distort cooperative discussion and action (*A Guide to Curriculum Planning in Home Economics*, 1987, p. 57). Skills in practical reasoning and development of critical awareness allow individuals to question in that ways various norms and concepts are perpetuated and in whose interest (who gains from these norms and concepts) (*A Guide to Curriculum Planning in Home Economics*, 1987, p. 62). For example, the economic, political, moral and social consequences of these actions are examined on a personal family level as well as on a family as a societal institution level.

Technical actions are those which increase control over nonhuman resources to meet a predetermined end or goal. Assuming the ends have been critically examined and justified, means are selected to achieve or reach the end. The intellectual skills of problem solving and decision making are needed for technical actions.

Lack of Knowledge Base Gap: Conceptualization of Childhood/Adulthood

**From lack of/or shallow understanding of childhood and adulthood	——————→	Full understanding or more complete conceptualization of childhood and adulthood

Lack of understanding about "childhood" and "adulthood" and the influence history and a multicultural society have on the conceptions of these in relation to parents and children.

Lack of Knowledge Based Gap: Full Understanding of Development and Developmental Needs of Children and Parents/Adults

**From lack of/shallow understanding of development and developmental processes regarding children and parents/adults	——————➤	Full/more complete understanding of development and developmental process of children and parents/adults

Lack of deep understanding of the developmental needs and processes of children and adults limits families and societal institutions as they deal with individuals on a personal and a collective basis.

Lack of Knowledge Based Gap: Conditions that Foster Parent/Child Well–being and Quality Interactions

**From overly simplistic or technical conceptualization only of conditions supportive of parents and children	——————➤	interpretive, technical and critically reflective conceptualization of conditions supportive of parents and children

Lack of deep understanding of the conditions that foster and sustain positive parent/child interactions, how each person (parent and child) is affected by the other, and the particular contextual situation.

Lack of Intellectual Processes Gap: Communication and Critical Action Systems

**Simple or only technical action with family only of conditions supportive of parents and children	——— ➢	communicative, technical and critical action within family
	——— ➢	communicative, technical and critical action collectively

Technical thinking and technical action are inadequate to address and solve the continuing concerns of families. This lack of working knowledge and skills regarding how to take reasoned and deliberate action within families and collectively on the behalf of families as a societal institution is apparent in the decision–making and action-taking process.

Lack of Intellectual Processes Gap: Generating Complexity

**From low or simple thinking and social processes within family and collectively (low integration)	——— ➢	complex thinking and social processes within family (high integration)
	——— ➢	complex thinking and social processes collectively (high integration)

This intellectual process gap is the lack of working knowledge and social skills to generate complexity in thinking approaches to dealing with the continuing concerns parents and children face within the family and collectively on behalf of families.

Specific Questions of Family Concern

Based on the gap analysis of what enduring concerns arise as a gap between current state of affairs regarding parents and children and the alternative valued ends, the broad continuing concern of families related to parents and children is formulated as:

What ought to be done within the family and collectively (on behalf of the family as a social institution) in addressing and solving complex parent/child relations questions that arise in everyday life (both in the private and the public domain)?

More specific questions of family concern are listed as possibilities below. This list is merely a sample; it is not considered comprehensive.

Family Questions

1. What ought to be done about the developmental needs and processes of children and parents/adults within the family?
2. What ought to be done about understanding the various meanings of childhood and adulthood?
3. What ought to be done about developing insights into the attitudes and expectations helped by family members and the impact these have on parent/child relations?
4. What ought to be done about developing critical understanding of parent/child interaction patterns in relation to nurturance, power and on–going relations?
5. What ought to be done within the family regarding actions taken that affect p-arent/child relations in everyday life?

Near Environment/Community Questions

1. What ought to be done within the community and neighborhoods to meet the needs of children and parents?
2. What ought to be done about home/school relations?
3. What ought to be done about the workplace in relation to parents, children and dependent or elderly family members.
4. What ought to be done about child care needs of families within the community or neighborhood?

5. What ought to be done by families within the community setting in identifying and addressing common concerns related to parents and children?

Societal/Public Policy Questions

1. What ought to be done about the media and its influence upon parents and children's attitudes, expectations and behaviors?
2. What ought to be done about the social and public policies that affect the everyday lives of children and parents?
3. What ought to be done about examining the societal norms that affect parent/child relations?
4. What ought to be done about economic and health policies and programs that affect children, parents and dependent adult family members?

SUMMARY

This chapter described the nature and significance of continuing concerns of families related to parents and children. The current state of affairs regarding parents and children section described the existing conditions that families face in the United States in relation to family, parental resources, parent/child relations, socialization and knowledge. Summary statements were drawn based upon these current states.

The second section delineated three alternative valued ends; the training view, the personal development view and the educative view. After describing these alternative views, the educative view was selected as being most desirable. Instrumental values to help us achieve this critically reflective outcome were further described in terms of the family setting, the near environment of community setting and the societal/public setting.

The last section dealt with gaps between the what is (current state of affairs), and what should be (valued ends). The gaps were of two types: moral/political and

intellectual. The moral/political dimensions of the gap were identified as nurturance, economic and social responsibleness. Intellectual gaps consisted of two types: lack of a knowledge base and lack of intellectual processes. This section concluded with specific questions of family concern on three levels: personal/family, near environment/community and societal/public.

Chapter one, the family narrative, lays a base upon which Chapter Two, the rationale for a course about parents and children, is developed. Chapter Two will address the school and sets forth a rationale for schools developing and offering a parents and children course at the high school level.

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CHAPTER II

Rationale for a Course about Parents and Children

Fllowing from the family narrative, which describes the condition of parents and children in contemporary society and the moral/political and intellectual gaps that exist between current conditions and the ends considered desirable to seek, this chapter contains rationale for developing a course about parents and children that addresses the gaps and concerns spelled out in Chapter I. Reasons why a parents and children course should be offered to high school students are addressed. Some assumptions are delineated about education, home economics/home economics education, and family and consumer education. Lastly, the unique focus of Family and Consumer Education and rationale for this particular Parents and Children course are given.

Social Need

The social need to address these gaps currently exists. On behalf of society, the institutions of education can address these gaps by providing opportunities for students as family member citizens to learn about the family as a significant social institution. Briefly, these gaps can be addressed by:

- understanding the developmental needs and processes of children and parents/adults and the conditions that foster the full development of these individuals on a personal and collective basis.
- developing a full understanding of "childhood and adulthood" and the influence of history and a multicultural society on these conceptions in relation to parents and children.
- recognizing that nurturance is learned and that society must foster the conditions regarding parents and children that support nurturant relations.

• developing a sense of common good, linking individuals to society and attending to needs of children and others (immediate and long–term).

• understanding the conditions that foster and sustain positive parent/child interactions, and how each is affected by the other and the particular contextual situation.

• recognizing what ought to be done about supporting the needs of parents and children within the near environment/community including school, workplace and neighborhood.

• recognizing what ought to be done about supporting the needs of parents and children collectively within societal/public settings.

• developing intellectual processes and working knowledge regarding how to take reasoned and deliberate action (communicative, critical and technical) within families and collectively on behalf of families as a societal institution.

• developing working knowledge and social skills to generate complexity and thinking approaches to deal with the continuing concerns of parents and children within the family and collectively on behalf of families.

THE NEED FOR A COURSE ABOUT PARENTS AND CHILDREN

This section focuses on the need for the school to offer a course dealing with parents and children at the high school level. The school, as an agent for society, needs to offer opportunities to students to develop their citizen skills. High schools should offer a course on parents and children because:

• First, schools have traditionally offered courses to help future citizens with their roles in society. High schools offer and frequently require all students to take courses

in government and economics because of the impact such understandings have in citizen development. The family as a social institution is probably more influential in developing future citizens as are the government and the economy. Thus, a course is needed that deals with the family and its roles and responsibilities in the development of future citizens.

• Second, parenthood whether in relation to one's own dependent family members or a citizen in the United States is one of the most significant roles in society and as such is deserving of greater attention and ongoing study and effort. Bigner (1989) points out that in many ways the role of parent is significantly different from other adult roles. Parenthood is a role that is irrevocable; one can not withdraw from being a parent easily or without psychological pain to self or others.

• Third, as with other adult roles, ideally the role of parent should be assumed only as a matter of choice, but often it is not. LeMasters (1977), a well–known Wisconsin family sociologist, indicates that one of the reasons people are unprepared for the parental role is " . . . the almost complete failure of high schools and colleges to include this subject in their courses of study" (p. 12). Bigner (1989) agrees that "Preparation for parenthood is poor compared with preparation for other adult social roles" (p. 8). He adds that this lack of specific education for parenthood in our educational systems is because subjects that deal with family life are usually taught as electives. Thus, students generally receive a minimum amount of exposure and many do not take any courses dealing with parents and children.

• Fourth, offering a parents and children course would be a preventive rather than remedial, therapeutic, or crisis clean-up measures. Preventive measures not only increase the likelihood of accomplishing family and societal goals, they are generally more cost effective in terms of money, time, and energy. Many of the problems the schools face could have been prevented if the parents as high school students had

meaningful experiences in addressing issues related to parents and children. For example, if parents (1) understood the importance of talking with; (2) possessed essential skills in reading and listening; and (3) had the psychological resources to follow through, more children would be ready for school and have a positive attitude towards learning.

• Fifth, understanding lifespan development and the developmental tasks of parents and children can help prevent abuse. As mentioned in Chapter One, Delissovoy (1973) found that teenagers—both parents and nonparents—had unrealistic expectations of young children. These unrealistic expectations on the part of young parents frequently led to child abuse because they thought their child was deliberately misbehaving.

• Sixth, schools are often judged upon the success of their graduates. Thus, schools emphasize job preparation and preparation for college and future careers. The success of the adult in the job/career role is strongly influenced by the development of responsibilities of adult roles as family member and parent. "Students do not form their parenthood role expectations in a vacuum, separate and apart from other adult role considerations. Rather, many men and women today consider the adult roles of occupation, marriage and parenthood as an interrelated package" (Knaub, Eversoll and Voss, 1981, p. 36). More adults attempt to handle career, family and parenting roles all at the same time. Stress associated with multiple role overload can lead... "to psychological burnout, feelings of guilt and the possibility of lower success than anticipated in one or all three adult roles" (Knaub, Eversoll and Voss, 1981, p. 37). Thus, experience in addressing the complex problems families face related to work and parenting can help students to become successful in their multiple adult roles.

• Seventh, a number of high school students are already involved in the parenting role. Some are biological parents. Others have major responsibilities in taking care

of their siblings. Still others have major nurturing responsibilities in parenting their own dependent parents, grandparents or great grandparents. Such a course would provide a basis for better understanding familial relations issues that students are currently experiencing. A parents and children course will also help them to better understand and appreciate their own parents and family.

• Eighth, even students who do not intend to become a biological/step–parent will choose careers that directly interact with or impact upon children and parents such as teacher, day care provider, nurse, counselor, lawyer, doctor, supervisor, coach, etc. Therefore, a parents and children course would be beneficial to these students.

• Ninth, the decisions that parents and other adult citizens make have lifelong consequences on the lives of our future citizens. Hamberg (1992) who headed the Carnegie foundation study on America's children stated "Since all young adolescents—even the affluent ones—are often ill–prepared to make fateful decisions with lifelong consequences and with powerful impact on others, it is valuable for them to learn how to make informed, deliberate decisions rather than ignorant and impulsive ones" (p.244). A parents and children course would help adolescents develop a knowledge base to make more informed judgments.

• Tenth, all citizens have a moral obligation to provide for the well-being of others though social policies and programs. These social policies and programs affect children indirectly and directly. For example, practices in the workplace affect the amount of time and psychological energy that parents have to interact with their children. Educational policies on the national, state, and local levels help to determine the present and future quality of our citizenry. These social policies and programs affect child welfare and the welfare of families as an institution.

Results from recent studies strengthen the case for offering a parents and children course (see support materials in Appendix A). These materials include information

from a national poll on family life that includes current attitudes toward children and family life (Harris, xxxx). Also included are data from a national study of children's readiness for school conducted by the Carnegie Foundation. Both national and Wisconsin statistics are cited.

Assumptions About Education, Home Economics/Home Economics Education and Family and Consumer Education

Assumptions are taken for granted ideas or suppositions. They are the foundation upon which various views of education, home economics/home economics education and Family and Consumer Education are built. Each alternative view is based on a particular set of assumptions. This section will outline the assumptions basic to the Wisconsin family focus view as a basis for the need and rationale for a course about parents and children.

Education

The assumptions of this view of education include the following categories: aim of education, view of the learner, view of knowledge and educational methods (Brown, 1978; Brown, 1980; *A Guide to Curriculum Planning in Home Economics*, 1987).

The aim of education is to prepare youth for active participation as family member citizens in a democratic society. This requires that students be encouraged to participate in practices that will allow them to make intelligent, responsible and reasoned decisions (Brown, 1978).

Learners are viewed as active, thinking individuals who are capable of growth. They have the potential for developing complex thought processes, sensitivity to self and others, and intellectual, social and ethical maturity. Learners have qualitatively different levels of thought at different stages of development. Learners at any developmental level are capable of taking reasoned action based upon values (Brown, 1978, 1980).

Knowledge consists of both ideas and processes; that is, subject matter (what is known) and intellectual processes (ways of knowing including learning processes and methods). The learner constructs and reconstructs his/her own knowledge through interaction with others and the environment. The learner integrates knowledge into working power. Different types of knowledge include technical knowledge, communicative knowledge and critical reflective knowledge (Brown, 1978).

Educational methods which are consistent with this view of education include critical analysis, practical reasoning, generating cognitive complexity and democratic processes. The methods used by the teacher decrease in level of control and increase in terms of cognitive complexity as the student grows intellectually and socially (*A Guide to Curriculum Planning in Home Economics, 1987*).

Home Economics/Home Economics Education

Education and home economics are both professions. Home economics is a personal service profession based upon a specific mission (Brown, 1980). Different views of home economics and Home Economics Education are held by professionals within the field (Thomas, 1986; Hultgren and Wilkosz, 1986; Smith and Morgan, 1986; Stout and Smith, 1986; Coalition for Vocational Home Economics Education, 1989).

The view of home economics that is consistent with the Wisconsin family focus approach has been described by Brown (1977). The mission of home economics is to "enable families, both as individual units and generally as a social institution, to build and maintain systems of action which lead (1) to maturing in individual self–formation and (2) to enlightened, cooperative participation in the critique and formulation of social goals and the means for accomplishing them" (Brown and Paolucci, 1978).

In this view of home economics, it is assumed that the family is studied on an individual level as well as collectively as a social institution within society. Within the individual family, family members are seen as capable of constructing meanings, forming

values, learning different ways of interacting socially and intellectually, and taking deliberate reasoned action individually. Individual family members and family units can work together collectively to critique, formulate and change family norms and question societal norms. The individual family setting is where members learn technical, communicative and critically reflective systems of action. Families create the conditions for the development and maturation of family member citizens (Brown, 1980).

As a major social institution within society, the family is a political force because through collective action with other families, it can critique social norms, and take reasoned action to transform societal conditions. There are mutual and reciprocal relations among individual family units, the family as a social institution, and society (Brown and Paolucci, 1978).

The previously listed assumptions identify particular ideas about this view of education and home economics. Together education as a profession and home economics as a profession join together to set the direction for home economics education. Again, there are different views of home economics education within schools and colleges across the United States and globally (Brown, 1978; Fauske and Staaland, 1979; Brown, 1980; Strom, 1986; Thomas, 1986; Peterat, 1989; Peterat and Smith, 1989). The view of home economics education that is consistent with the Wisconsin family focus view is Family and Consumer Education.

Family and Consumer Education

The view of Family and Consumer Education is unique to Wisconsin schools at the 6-12 level. This view has been detailed in *A Guide to Curriculum Planning in Home Economics*, (1987). Although a number of other states hold views of home economics education that are very similar, the following description will address assumptions consistent with the Wisconsin family focus approach.

- The mission of home economics education is to prepare students for work of the family
- Home Economics Education can enable students, as family members, to develop the intellectual and motivational orientations to become self directing in their thinking, learning, and acting. (*A Guide to Curriculum Planning in Home Economics*, 1987, p. xx).

The term "work of the family" is a uniquely Wisconsin conceptualization which hold great meaning for teachers and students within the school setting. Since the primary goal of Family and Consumer Education in Wisconsin 6-12 is work of the family, it is important to further describe this idea.

The work of the family involves the development of the capacities of family members used in formation of the self and also in formulating societal goals and conditions through cooperative participation in a democratic society. Although the word "work" has been viewed in a technical sense by some, in the Wisconsin family focus approach it has been defined from a critical reflective perspective. Through work of the family, individuals can have a useful and meaningful life as a result of their social interactions and individual choices within families as they address continuing concerns. On a societal level, work of the family is the development of human capital for socially responsible action within a democratic society. More specifically, work of the family includes:

- examining the power of family in relation to that of other institutions, judging what cultural traditions to transmit to younger generations, and allowing for, as well as cultivating, lasting nurturant relationships;
- promoting conditions that enhance the family's ability to engage in the development of mature persons and mediating conditions that hinder the family in this work;

- developing in persons the abilities to think, feel, and act in increasingly mature ways regarding the continuing responsibilities of the family for the full development of its members; and
- engaging in various types of actions that develop self-directed and socially responsible persons. (*A Guide to Curriculum Planning Home Economics*, 1987, p. 81).

These assumptions about education, home economics and Family and Consumer Education provide the foundation for developing the Parents and Children course. In addition, work of the family, a major concept unique to Family and Consumer Education in Wisconsin schools, has been described.

Unique Focus of Family and Consumer Regarding Parents and Children

While it is recognized that students study aspects of parents and children in other school disciplines, Family and Consumer Education provides a unique perspective. In Family and Consumer Education, the entire focus is from the family perspective, both as an individual unit and as a significant social institution. The mission of Family and Consumer Education is to prepare students for the work of the family. This work involves the family's role in self formation of its members and formation of society, and in improving societal conditions which limit or prevent the family from doing its work.

More specifically, the Parents and Children course was designed to help students explore the continuing concern of family, "What ought to be done within the family and collectively (on behalf of the family as a social institution) in addressing and solving complex parent/child relation questions that arise in everyday life (in both the private and the public domain?)" Answering this question is the focus of the course. Subject matter concepts, intellectual skills, and social processes are necessary to address this question.

Emphasis in the course is placed on critical thinking, practical reasoning skills, and generating conceptual complexity about the best course of action to take in resolving the continuing concerns of family. The development of working knowledge, and intellectual and social processes are emphasized so that students, as family members and as family member citizens, can take more deliberative and reasoned action as they work out parent/child relations within the family and collectively within society.

The above statements briefly summarize the unique focus that Family and Consumer Education brings to a parents and children course. In developing courses across the school curriculum, it is important that teachers from different departments and fields work together to conceptualize and clarify the focus of the curriculum for which each is responsible. Each discipline should have a unique perspective to bring to the study of parents and children.

RATIONALE FOR A PARENTS AND CHILDREN COURSE IN FAMILY AND CONSUMER EDUCATION

Change in this technological world is so rapid that it is often unclear how parents/adults can best help children prepare for an uncertain future. The Parents and Children course can help students understand the role that the family as a major social institution can play in determining the direction of change in this society.

When students examine the parenthood role and the myths associated with it, they are better prepared for making more enlightened and responsible decisions about becoming parents and/or parenting others. Critical thinking skills are developed that will allow students to go beyond simply reacting to change and take a proactive role in determining/influencing the conditions of their lives. In addition the course emphasizes

the need of parents and children for a supportive community and that the provision of support is everyone's responsibility in a democratic society.

The Parents and Children course contributes to Wisconsin's Family and Consumer Education programs in the following ways:

A. The view of family is seen as active in shaping change and directing the future. In this course family is emphasized on a personalized basis (within the family) and a generalized sense (family as an institution in society). The view of family is inclusive of multiple family forms and multicultural and ethnic background which is representative of the actual Wisconsin Families in the 1990's. It is not limited only to the traditional two parent families of the 1950's in which the father worked outside the home and the mother devoted herself to the children.

B. The view of parents and children emphasizes the development of both children and parents as they grow and change and the interactional influences they exert on one another. Parent/child relations and the reciprocal nature of their interactions are examined within the family and collectively on behalf of families in society. The notion that parents socialize children and children influence/change/socialize parents is consistent within a democratic society.

C. Social conditions and norms are studied to determine which of these are conducive to family well–being. Society is seen as being made up of individuals and groups who can direct and shape societal conditions. A democracy requires critical examination of norms and social conditions.

D. Conditions which promote the well–being of children are examined within the family setting, the near environment/community setting such as schools, child care, workplace and neighborhood, and societal/public settings such as public policies.

E. The aim of the course is to enable students to become competent in developing knowledge, critical thinking and social skills to take a more deliberative, reasoned approach to the continuing concerns of parents and children. To deal with these concerns, students need the ability to generate conceptual complexity since the concerns of families are not simple, but multidimensional and specific to a particular situation.

Contributions made by the Parents and Children course to Wisconsin's Family and Consumer Education program further enhance the ability of high school students to deal with complex on–going concerns of the family. Also this approach helps the school meet its responsibilities.

Responsibilities of the School

The school needs to provide opportunities for students, as family member citizens, to learn about the family as a significant social institution. To participate in a democracy, family member citizens are expected to do the work of the family. That is, they are expected to provide the conditions within which children can develop into responsible adults who are capable of deliberative, rationale thought, who can think critically about the goals of society and the social forces within society that can hinder or help the family in conducting its work.

Family and Consumer Education provides opportunities for students to develop the knowledge base, critical thinking processes and abilities to take reasoned action about conditions within the family and collectively as a social institution regarding parents and children. The Parents and Children course has been designed to address the continuing concerns of the family with regards to parents and children. Students, as family member citizens, need to become more skilled in addressing these family concerns.

The above statements briefly summarize the unique focus that Family and Consumer Education brings to parents and children. In developing courses across the school

curriculum, it is important that teachers from different departments and fields work together to conceptualize and clarify the focus of the curriculum for which each is responsible.

SUMMARY

This chapter set forth a rationale for a course about parents and children. First, the societal need was briefly identified as well as ways the gaps can be addressed. Second, the need for a course about parents and children at the high school level as described. Ten reasons were given for offering such a course. The third section outlined assumptions about education, home economics/home economics education and Family and Consumer Education including the work of the family conceptualization. This was followed by a section describing the unique focus of Family and Consumer Education regarding the Parents and Children course. Lastly, rationale for offering the Parents and Children course in Family and Consumer Education was described.

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CHAPTER III

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Based upon the Wisconsin approach to home economics, education and home economics education which is referred to as Family and Consumer Education in Chapter II, this chapter will describe the Parents and Children course in further detail. The concept of work of the family, as outlined in the previous chapter, is particularly relevant to this course.

This chapter begins with the on-going question of family concern and a specific question of family concern. This is followed by several illustrative cases and accompanying questions which reveals the essence of the Parents and Children course and helps the reader to have a better notion of the essential or representative concepts of the course. Student outcomes and some assumptions about the course content are delinitated to give direction to the course and to draw the reader's attention to the relationship between the parents and children content and the three systems of family action outlined in Chapter I.

On-Going Question of Family Concern

What ought to be done within the family and collectively (on behalf of the family as a social institution) in addressing and solving complex parent/child relations questions that arise in everyday life (in both the private and the public domain)?

Specific Question of Family Concern

What ought to be done about understanding and evaluating the effect of attitudes and expections of the individual on parent/child relations?

or

What ought to be done about creating and maintaining parent/child relations?

Illustrative Case

This section will provide illustrative cases and questions to highlight the continuing concerns of family and to make the continuing concerns of family more concrete to the reader. Themes/features/dimensions of the continuing concerns of family will be depicted in these cases. These illustrative cases will be of two types: family events and family interactions.

In the case of family events, the background or context will be briefly outlined to tell about what lead up to the event. A description of the family event will be given about:

a. something that did or did not work;
b. a difficult situation in which the parent did not know that the child meant or how to respond to the event; and
c. consequences that followed the event. How did participants in the event think and feel?

The second type of illustrative case is family interaction. First, a description of what occurs prior to the interaction will be given to provide a basis for

understanding the interaction. The interaction will be described and dialogue given of what was actually said, what was asked, who behaved and how the other responded.

Following each of the illustrative cases, questions are given to help draw out the intended meaning of the illustration. These questions help to illuminate the representative ideas of the Parents and Children course. According to Phenix (1964), "..content should be chosen so as to exemplify the representative ideas of the disciplines" (p. 322). "Representative ideas are concepts that afford an understanding of the main features of the discipline" (p. 323).

Representative ideas help to reveal the patterns of the discipline that are productive of further insight and "...provide a kind of map of the discipline that keeps one from getting lost in the details" (Phenix, 1964, p. 324). Representative ideas "...are of such a quality that they stand for large quantities of material. They are elements of the understanding of which makes it unnecessary to learn large numbers of particular items of knowledge" (p. 324).

These illustrative cases which include representative ideas are written in the form of a story. Stories can reveal differences between surface and deeper meanings and help to show different levels of meaning and interaction so common in parent/child relations. According to Frank Smith (1990), thought flows in terms of stories--stories about events, stories about people and stories about intentions.

We learn in the form of stories from the time we are very young. Children and adults construct stories to make sense of events. We are drawn to stories because of our desire to give meaningful order to the world.

Smith (1990) sees the brain as a story-seeking, story-creating instrument. The universal demand for attention, approval and acceptance, the insistent "watch me" of children and adults as an individual's story in which he/she is the leading character in the narrative of life (Smith, 1990). Our own personal stories and our own identity falls apart when we lose an important character in our life. As humans, we may then spend long periods of time looking for people to fill certain roles, i.e., mother, father, child, spouse, grandparent, caregiver.

Stories serve several functions for us as humans (Smith, 1990) such as:

a. provide us with human experiences,
b. enable us to experience life situations and events that we would not normally experience,
c. broaden our horizons by creating possible worlds
d. and involve us in a personal way.

Therefore, the story format was chosen because it allows us to uncover representative ideas and offers cues about the essentials in life.

Personal stories have three components: experiences, concepts and themes. Experiences are the facts that happen to us, the surface experience. Concepts are the beliefs or

ideas we use to interpret our experiences and guide our behavior. Themes summarize and consolidate experiences and concepts. They have a deeper meaning.

Phenix contrasts good and poor teachers by whether or not they use representative ideas to tell the story of the discipline and to reveal a deeper meaning. "The poor teacher piles item upon item of information and experience, only making certain that each contribution falls within the subject being pursued. The good teacher, by constrast. chooses each item or experience with the deliberate purpose of giving substance to certain basic concepts that are distinctive of the discipline studied" (p. 328).

Wisconsin Family and Consumer Education teachers who participated in the advisory committee for the development of the Parents and Children course created some stories as illustrative cases to demonstrate the representative ideas in the course. They also critiqued several illustrative cases written by the project staff. A sampling of this work follows.

Illustrative Case One

"Today Is the First Day of the Rest of Your Life."

My great grandparents had this ugly gold wall hanging on the wall of their home. I saw it every time I visited, but never really thought about what it meant. I knew it must have meaning but didn't bother to ask why she had it hanging there.

My name is Jennifer. I am the oldest child in our extended family. It has always been my responsibility to be the role model for all the cousins.

When I was a freshman in high school I thought this duty could be over. My six uncles and their families and my aunt and her family had planned a February outing. It happened to fall on the same weekend as my church's youth lock-in.

My friends Tricia and Tanya really wanted me to go with them. I begged my mother, but to no avail. She said maybe next year, but that the younger cousins really were looking forward to having me along for the weekend.

After getting to La Crosse and playing silly kid games with the younger cousins, I didn't feel as bad about being forced to be along because my younger cousins made me feel important and extremely special. They were constantly wanting to have special little talks with just me.

On Sunday morning, when my mom came down to the pool. I could tell something was wrong. I wasn't sure how to ask what the problem was.

Then my mom told me my friends had been killed in a car accident on the way to the lock-in.

Suddenly I felt guilty for the fun I had had with my cousins and for still being alive because I would have been with my friends if my mom hadn't made me go on the family outing. Should I be happy--- but I hurt.

What should I be feeling?

What should I do?

What will I do?

What should I tell my mom?

I know I have to talk to my friends' parents, but how do I do it?

The days that followed were a blur. What is very vivid to me took place several months later when we were riding to Eau Claire for a shopping and luncheon trip for just my mom and me. As we went by the tree where my friends died, I remember sharing my feelings with my mom. I felt guilty because my friends were not alive and at the same time, I felt like celebrating being alive.

It was then that my mom shared her feelings. She shared her mixed feelings of happiness for the joy of still having me to enjoy and share things with and yet feeling guilty of being happy because my friends' parents no longer had that privilege. I hadn't thought about the possibility that we shared the same types of feelings and were both struggling.

On the way home we were talking about the successful shopping trip we'd had. I was happily talking about singing and dancing with the State 4-H Show Chorus that summer. Oddly, I suddenly thought about that ugly old gold wall hanging at my great grandparents home. Out loud I said---"Today Is the First Day of the Rest of Your Life." Mom, is that why you've helped us celebrate family and occasions as special? It is why family gatherings are

so important to you and dad? Are they really celebrations of life?

Today as I sit rocking my baby daughter and looking at that ugly gold wall hanging, I give her an extra hug as I think back to the day this wall hanging became significant to me.

Discussion Questions

1. What is meant by celebration of life?
2. What is celebration?
3. How do we prepare for talking about death?
4. What could Jennifer have done if she hadn't shared her feelings?
5. What could have happened it Jennifer's mom had just brushed Jennifer's feelings aside?
6. What could have happened if Jennifer's mom hadn't shared her feelings?
7. What kind of communication styles do you think Jennifer will use with her daughter?
8. What might Jennifer have discovered about her great grandparents if she had asked why the wall hanging was important to them?
9. What might Jennifer's mom have learned from her grandparents?
10. How might Jennifer use this personal experience as a means to help her share her continuing concerns of family with her child (children)?

Illustrative Case Two

The Babysitter

Joan and Laura were two sisters who lived down the street from our family. Because of their close proximity and high school age, they made "ideal" babysitters. The girls took turns taking care of my younger sister and me.

On one particular evening, it was Joan's turn to babysit. Joan had babysat us several other times and seemed to not want to play with us as much as her younger sister Laura. It was upsetting to me to find out it was her turn to babysit again. As on previous occasions, after my parents left, Joan laid on the couch and watched TV. When I asked her to play with me, she said that she was tired and didn't feel well. I thought it was her "job" to play with me. Because I didn't often have someone to play with, I was disappointed that this anticipated "playmate" was not going to live up to my expectations. I recall growing frustrated after asking her several times to get up and play with me. Even in my child's mind, I knew that she wasn't being a responsible caregiver.

Later that evening, an opportunity arose to act on my frustration. Joan unexpectedly went outside to put the bikes in the garage. At that time I decided to lock her out. I remember standing by the back door watching her out the window. It was dark out and the porch light was on. I remember thinking that she shouldn't be getting paid to be a babysitter when she wasn't doing the job anyway.

As I reflect on this childhood memory, I recognize that a work value I hold today began to be developed as a child. That value relates to individuals being responsible in their roles/jobs. In many different contexts, adults have roles to play with regard to children. With these roles come many responsibilities and expectations. As adults make aa committment upon taking on a role, the responsibility plus expectations that accompany that role need to be examined from multiple perspectives. This will assure that the needs of all individuals involved will be met. Reasoned action is based on this premise.

Discussion Questions

1. What is/should be the role of a babysitter from the perspective of:
   a. the child?
   b. the babysitter?
   c. the parents?
2. How might this child's parents have responded to this situation?
3. What might the consequences of this situation have been?
4. What alternative actions might the child have taken?
5. What makes an "ideal" babysitter or caregiver (rather than reaching a certain age)?

Illustrative Case Three

Mom's Version

This neighborhood doesn't have any children except for my son Josh who is in kindergarden. He enjoys school and being with his friends, but gets bored on the weekends. Our neighborhood is made up of retired couples, except for our next door neighbor Ted who was divorced two years ago. Kyle, his six year old son, spends every other weekend with Ted.

Yesterday, Josh came home and the first thing he said is, "Mom, I have good news and bad news!" (He is obviously pleased at being able to use this newly learned phrase.)

"Which do you want to hear first?"

"I guess the bad news."

"Kyle's mom was killed in a car crash last night. The good news is that now he will be living next door with his dad all the time, not just every other weekend."

Josh's method of relying the death of his best friend's mother is jarring. I was shocked at the way Kyle told me. The thoughts that flashed in my mind, in addition to my sorrow for little Kyle, are how can Josh make light of death in that way? Have I raised an insesitive child? I almost started to lecture Josh on why it's inappropriate to relate the news of someone's death in that way. But I caught myself.

Josh's Version

I feel happy! I can hardly wait to tell Mom the "new joke" Donny told me. And I can't wait to tell her the good news! Kyle will be living next door all the time now. Kyle can play with me everyday! Mom will sure be surprised!

"Mom, I have good news and bad news! Which do you want to hear first?"

Mom smiles at me and says "I guess the bad news."

I jump up and down. "Kyle's mom was killed in a car crash last night." Then I giggle, "The good news is Kyle will be living next door with his dad all the time now, not just every other weekend!"

Mom just looks at me with this funny look on her face. She looks like she's mad. I thought she'd laugh at my joke. Mom pulls me close and hugs me for the longest time. I wiggle away. She smells like soap.

<u>Questions</u>

1. Why are Josh's version of the story and his Mom's version of the incident so different?
2. How does a five or six year old think about death?
3. What was the most imporant aspect of context from the viewpoint of
   a. Josh?
   b. his mother?
4. What are some of the factors that make this incident complex?
   a. family context
   b. near environment/community context

c. societal context

5. What values does the mother hold?

   What values does Josh hold?

6. What reasoned actions ought the mother take?

Illustrative Case Four

Working parents often say that dinner time is the worst time of the day. Parents (and sometimes children) are tired: everyone is "starved" and stress levels rise.

Jan arrives home from work at 6:30 p.m. Road construction detours have added twenty minutes to the bus route from downtown, where Jan works in an office, to the daycare where 3 year old Jenny stays. Mrs. Brown who has the daycare home, gets mad when Jan is late and has started charging an additional fee after six o'clock. On the walk home, Jenny keeps asking "Why doesn't Mrs. Brown like you? Why is she mad?" This is the third time this week Jan's had to pay extra and Jan hasn't even taken time to stop for groceries.

Tony and Dan, 9 and 7, have been home from school for 2 1/2 hours and Jan can hear their shouts in the hallway outside of the apartment. Jan and Jenny pass Mr. Hill in the hall. He "glares" at them. Mr. Hill has complained to the building manager twice this month about the noise Tony and Dan make. When Jan opens the door, Tony and Dan each try to be the first to blurt out their version of why the eggs exploded in the microwave.

Jan sinks into a chair and kicks off the "too tight" shoes. Jan leans back and tries to block out the blare of the T.V., the heat, Jenny's whining, the boys" insistent "What is for supper?" Jan just needs a few minutes of quiet--a few minutes of sleep. Jan just wishes they'd be quiet!

"Shut up! Just shut up! The first one to say another word gets smacked!"

Questions

1. What are the feelings/emotions that Jan appears to have? Tony and Dan? Jenny?

2. Is this a "typical" situation that occurs in the everyday life of a working parent? Why or why not?

3. What are the situational and contextual factors that affect this family ?
   a. on the personal/family level
   b. on the workplace/neighborhood/community level
   c. on the societal or public policy level

4. What values does Jan appear to hold?

5. What ought Jan and Jan's family do to address the child care concern from a
   a. technical view point?
   b. communicative view point?
   c. critical reflective view point?

6. Assuming that Jan and Jan's family has made every technical change possible already given their situation, what actions might they take at the near environment/community level? societal level?

7. What assumptions have you made about Jan's gender? marital status? economic status?

Illustrative Case Five

Ryan, 12 almost 13, calls home at 9:45 pm to tell his parents to come and pick him up---the school dance is done. He also asks, "Dad, can you give Kara (a neighbor) a ride, too?

"Sure, no problem."

"Dad, can she stay overnight at our house?"

"What? No, Ryan, I don't think it is a good idea to have a girl sleep over."

"But, Dad, there is a reason!"

"What is it?"

"Well, I can't tell you, but there's a reason."

"Ryan, you can tell me. ~If its a good reason, maybe --I just need to know more."

"Never mind!" Ryan hangs up.

Kara doesn't ride with them, she has gone to a girlfriend's house. On the way home, Ryan's father says "What is wrong, Ryan?"

Ryan, trying to control the catch in his voice, says softly, "I'm scared. Kara is scared too."

"Does this have anything to do with the reason you asked if Kara could spend the night at our house?"

"Yah, her parents were't home and she was afraid to be there alone."

"Dad, do you remember that TV show, Unsolved Mysteries? This is just like the show last week where..."

Questions

1. How do parents know if they are dealing with a child's concerns or a teen's concerns?
2. Why couldn't Ryan give the reason Kara wanted to sleep over? Fear of appearing foolish/childish?
3. Should a parent trust that a child's/adolescent's evaluation of a situation is "reason enough" or insist on an explanation? What if Kara had been afraid of abuse?
4. When does a child/adolescent become an adult? What is the difference between childhood and adulthood?
5. In what ways does media influence our thinking and impact on our everyday thoughts and actions?
6. In what ways are parent/child relations affected by:
   a. the neighborhood/school/community context?
   b. the media?
   c. events are currently happening in society?

Illustrative Case Six

Characters: Dad, Mom, Grandpa (his father), Son-Charlie, Son's friend--Mike

Mom and Dad are sitting in the living room with the TV and stereo off, just talking. The son comes down the steps from his room and, unnoticed by his parents, sees this setting in the living room and senses that something serious is being discussed. He knew he shouldn't have thrown that water balloon out the fifth grade window at school, but his best friend Mike had already done it and said nobody else would know. I can also remember Mandy saying "The teacher is going to catch you!" Mike says, "I can't stand Mandy--but Mom says I have to be nice to her because Mom is dating Mandy's dad." Should I go down there and confess or just wait? At that moment, I hear "Charlie, could you come down here." Oh no, this is it! "Charlie," says Mom "we've been talking about Grandpa and we'd like you to sit down and talk with us."

It suddenly occurred to me that Mike is brilliant. Nobody did find out!

Discussion follows about the problem the family is facing. The problem is that Grandpa has been living on his own for the past five years since Grandma died. His health and memory are failing and it is apparent that there needs to be a decision made about his future. This is Dad's father and Dad's only sibling is a brother who is a career airman stationed in Germany.

Dad feels an obligation to solve the problem, scared, and torn between his responsibilities to his immediate family and his father.

Mom feels overwhelmed between her wants and her values. She wonders how can we manage this all.

Charlie feels completely positive because of his past experiences with Grandpa. For example, Charlie enjoys Grandpa's baseball card collection, making fishing fly ties together and listening to his funny stories.

Grandpa is aware something needs to change, but is not sure of what the change should be.

Meanwhile, Mom and Dad are starting to go out and investiage the possible choices of what to do about Grandpa using various community resources. They take Grandpa and Charlie along. Charlies spends the time looking through Grandpa's baseball cards, reading comic books, and at times tuning in the conversation.

Dad comes home feeling that there should be public policies to help families deal with their elder care concerns. He questions himself as to why he never thought about this before and questions his previous actions.

Charlie overhears a conversation where Mom, Dad and Grandpa are discussing their trip. He also overhears Grandpa talking to his friends and how Grandpa interprets the information he found out.

The decision was finally reached and Grandpa moves into their home. Charlie finds himself having to deal personally

with the problem and feels jealous of the time that Grandpa takes with Mom and Dad. He finally approaches his parents about his concern. Charlie's parents help him to understand that these decisions aren't easy and the results may not be perfect. They all need to continue to share their reactions and feelings of ups and downs. They also need to challenge themselves to use their family strengths to deal with their concerns.

Later Mike comes over and says "You're never going to believe it. Mom's going to marry Mandy's dad and Mandy will move in with us. It's so terrible that I'm just going to have to move out."

Charlie says "Hey, I think we need to have a talk."

Questions

1. When you see examples of parenting, which family systems of action (technical, communicative, critical reflective) do you see occuring?
2. How effective were Charlie and his family in using each family system of action?
3. How do our attitudes sometimes block our reasoning processes?
4. Explain what on-going concerns exist in this story. What makes these concerns on-going?
5. What do you think Charlie is going to say to Mike? How are their two situations similar?
6. Contrast the developmental changes physically, socially

and intellectually that may be happening to Charlie, to Mom and Dad, and to Grandpa over the next five years. How might these developmental changes alter their interaction patterns with each other?

7. How might parent/child relations change when the parent becomes less able to care for himself (Grandpa)?

These six illustrative cases and accompanying questions are meant to communicate the essense of the Parents and Children course by means illuminating examples. When representative examples are used with students a consequence is that students are taught to understand meaningfully (Phenix, 1964). The questions accompanying the illustrative cases were intended to point out the representative ideas in each of the cases such as:

1. the nature of questions that come up in daily life,
2. the complexity of the on-going concern including aspects of context such as developmental levels of the individuals involved, different settings (personal/family, near environment/community, and societal/public policy), norms
3. need for action based on thought,
4. consequences of various alternative actions.

The illustrative cases developed by the Wisconsin Parents and Children Advisory Committee and project staff also are based upon the assumptions about course content.

Assumptions about Course Content

This course has been developed for Family and Consumer Education from a family focus approach and has educative view based on cognitive developmental theory. In Chapter One, Family Narrative, the question was asked "What alternative valued ends do families seek/hold regarding the well-being of parents and children?" The goals sought, view of people (child and parent/adult), environment, and view of interaction (between family member and environment) were outlined from three alternative views: behavioral theory or training view, self theory or personal development view, and cognitive developmental theory or educative view. The family focus approach emphasizes communicative and critical reflective action, not just technical action. The educative view, based on cognitive developmental theory, is consistent with this Family and Consumer Education perspective.

To help the reader quickly identify content differences between the traditional child development course based on technical action (behavioral theory or technical view shown in column one) and the new parents and children course based on a communicative and critical reflective action (cognitive developmental theory or educative view shown in column two), see Table V, Orientations to the Parents and Children Course. Table V is divided into five sections: view of family, view of society, view of parents and children, perceived aim of course, and what is taught. Of course these two views are ideal types, that is, the differences in the training and educative views have been theortically

drawn to provide the reader with a sharp contrast.

The training view as an ideal type is based on behavioral theory and emphasizes technical action. The purpose of this traditional course is to teach child development principles. Children and their development are the primary emphasis and parents and parenting are a lesser or secondary emphasis. Reacting to and coping with developmental changes in children from a caregiver or parent perspective was taught within a personal or family setting. Existing social norms and conditions are accepted and students are taught coping strategies. The goal is to teach students to be efficient and effective in taking care of children and rearing children to meet societal expectations.

The educative view as an ideal type is based on cognitive developmenal theory and emphasizes communicative and critical reflective action." (Incidently, this view also requires a technical knowledge base as well as a communicative knowledge base and a critical reflective knowledge base.) The purpose of this course is enable students to take action regarding the parent/child relation within the family and collectively on behalf of families. Parents and children are seen as having reciprocal interactions thoughout life and thus act a socializing agents upon each other. The influence of context or the near environment and larger society affects specific parent/child interactions. Collectively, families can take deliberative action in a democratic society to critique and

change aspects of the near environment and larger society[79] that affect the well-being of parents and children. Content includes subject matter knowledge and intellectual skills and processes necessary for taking reasoned action. The goal is to enable students to address and solve the continuing concerns of family about the parent/child relation. See Table V.

Insert Table V here.

Since the work of the family is a human activity, by the vary nature of home economics, it draws from many established disciplines, but transcends any one of them. The study of Family and Consumer Education must begin with the issues, problems and potentials of families rather than with efforts to extend the limits of the traditional disciplines. While home economics is not history, economics, sociology, psychology, politial science, biology or chemistry, the knowledge of these and other disciplines contributes to what we already know as well as what we seek to discover. The family, as its center, is at once a biological, economic, social and cultural dynamic force. Individuals and family members need information and critical thinking skills to make informed choices. They are the people who will enjoy or endure the consequences of their actions. The choices and decisions are unending, complex and have surface as well as deep meanings and impact on personal/family, near environment/community and society levels.

Table V

Orientations to the Parents and Children Course

Technical/Training View 1	Cognitive Developmental View II
View of Family	
Passive, coping, reacting to change. Maintaining the status quo. Emphasis on personalized sense of family. When the family is viewed as an institution it is usually the traditional nuclear family that is considered.	Active in shaping change and directing the future. Emphasis on personalized (within family) and generalized sense of family (family as an institution in society). The view of the family as an institution is inclusive of multiple forms of multi–cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
View of Society	
Social conditions are accepted as they are. Existing norms are not questioned.	Social conditions and norms may or may not be conducive to family well–being. Society is made up of individuals and groups who can direct and shape conditions. Democracy requires critical examination of norms and social conditions.
View of Parents and Children	
Emphasis on child development.	Emphasis on the development of both children and parents and the interactional influences they exert on one another. Emphasis on parent/child relations and the reciprocal nature of their interactions and role reversals over the life cycle. Socialization of children and adults in a democratic society.

Technical/Training View 1	Cognitive Developmental View II
Perceived Aim of Course	
Competence in subject matter related to children primarily and parenting to a lesser extent.	Competence in developing knowledge, skills and abilities to take a more reasoned approach to continuing concerns of parents and children. Emphasis is placed on parent/child interaction and the influences of context (near environment and larger society).
What is Taught	
Subject matter and tasks that are most efficient in achieving predetermined ends regarding child rearing and parenting.	Subject matter and intellectual skills (emphasizing generating conceptual complexity) that enable building and maintaining family systems of action to address continuing concerns of the family. Address continuing concerns of family as they relate to parents and children. Communicative and critical reflective competence are emphasized for use in a democratic society.

Assumptions about Course Teaching Approach

Just as there is a shift in the content from the traditional child development course to the proposed Parents and Children course, there is a shift in teaching approaches. Since the goals of the proposed Parents and Children course are based upon a critical reflective thinking and action approach, the assumptions regarding the teaching approaches should be consistent.

A comparison of the subject matter approach to teaching and the process approach based on critical reflective thinking and reasoned action is shown in Table VI. The assumptions underlying the process approach based on critical thinking and deliberative reasoned action include:

* depth of concepts vs. breadth of coverage
* essential role of personal knowledge
* misconceptions broken down though active processes
* gaining only the knowledge one seeks and values
* systematically and holistically constructed knowledge
* the understanding that learning requires critical thinking and listening, engaging in public and private dialogue, and critically reflective thought
* thoughtful questioning and listening by the teacher in a interactive process to construct meanings together with the student(s).

For an indepth comparsion between the subject matter approach and the process approach (critical thinking and

reasoned action), please refer to Table VI, Contrasts in Teaching Approaches and Thinking Skills.

Insert Table VI here.

Teacher Knowledge Needed

In order to teach the Parents and Children course, it is desirable that teachers have a working knowledge of various concepts and intellectual processes. It is benefical for teachers to have:

* a deep understanding of human development;
* a thorough understanding of family systems of action including communicative, critical reflective and technical systems;
* an appreciation for family, cultural and ethnic commonalities and diversities;
* an understanding of gap analysis in relation to the moral/political gaps of nurturance, economics, and social responsibileness;
* an understanding of intellectual gaps with regards to lack of knowledge about the conceptualization of childhood/adulthood, the developmental needs of children and parents/adults, and the conditions that foster parent/child well-being and quality interactions; and
* an understanding of intellectual gaps with regards to lack of intellectual process regarding a working knowledge of how to take reasoned and deliberative communicative and critical action and lack of working knowledge and social skills to generate

TABLE VI

CONTRASTS IN TEACHING APPROACHES AND THINKING SKILLS

Assumptions Particularly Important in Parents and Children Course

Subject Matter Approach To Teaching	Process Approach (Thinking and Reasoned Action) To Teaching
Assumes that it is more important to cover a great deal of knowledge or information broadly than a small amount in depth.	Assumes that it is more important uncover by probing selected essential concepts in depth than to cover a great deal of information broadly.
Assumes that the personal experience of the student has no essential role to play in education.	Assumes that the personal experience of the student has an essential part to play in the processing of content by the student. They have experience being a child and experience with parenting.
Assumes that people can gain significant knowledge without seeking or valuing it, and hence that education can take place without a significant transformation of values for the learner.	Assumes people gain only the knowledge that they seek and value. This knowledge can be processed and internalized to impact on their actions. This only becomes working knowledge when it is processed and internalized, only then can knowledge impact on action.
Assumes that knowledge changes attitudes. Assumes that students' prejudices, biases, misconceptions, and ignorance are replaced by tolerance and truth simply by the acquisition of knowledge.	Assumes that prejudices, biases, and misconceptions are built up through actively constructed inferences embedded in experiences and must be broken down through a similar process. Thus students need many opportunities to express their views in class and a non-threatening environment in which to argue/reason/wrestle their way out of their misconceptions.
Assumes that knowledge can be learned best by being broken down into elements and subelements and each taught sequentially. Knowledge is additive.	Assumes that knowledge is systemic and holistic and can be learned only by continually going back and forth between wholes and parts.

TABLE VI CON'T

CONTRASTS IN TEACHING APPROACHES AND THINKING SKILLS

Assumptions Particularly Important in Parents and Children Course

Subject Matter Approach To Teaching	Process Approach (Thinking and Reasoned Action) To Teaching
Assumes students do not need to be taught skills in listening, only to pay attention.	Assumes that students need to be taught to listen critically and that his can be learned by degrees. Learning what another means by what he or she says requires questioning, trying on, testing, and engaging in public and private dialogue with the person. This requires critical thinking skills.
Assumes that the most important role of the teacher is given information.	Assumes that some important roles of the teacher are questioning and listening to enable students to come to shared meanings and understandings and encouraging students to do the same with each other. The teacher nudges the students towards taking reasoned actions.

Based on and reworked from Richard Paul's paper "Two Conflicting Theories of Knowledge, Learning, and Literacy: The Didactic and the Critical."

complexity of thinking approaches.

Teacher resources including conceptual outlines are more specifically detailed in the appendix. See Appendix A. Teacher Resource Material.

Student Learning Outcomes

Based upon the assumptions about course content and teaching approach outlined above, the conditions facing families described in Chapter One, and the responsibilies of the schools outlined in Chapter Two, the following student outcomes have been developed for the Parents and Children course. These are as follows:

---Defines childhood and adulthood as a concept socially, culturally and historically.

---Recognizes the complexity and the reciprocal nature of interaction and socialization between parents and children over time.

---Identifies the essental environmental conditions that foster the growth and development of children, parents and their parent/child relations.

---Realizes how the developmental needs and processes of children and parents/adults affect their interaction patterns throughout life.

---Shows a critical awareness of the complexity of the conditions, relations, and contextual factors that parents and children face in everyday life.

---Understands the influence of the personal/family setting, the near environment/community setting and

the social/public setting on parent/child relations.

---Recognizes the importance of the work of the family regarding parent/child relations (both within the family and collectively on behalf of families).

---Distinguishes among authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parent/child interaction styles.

---Recognizes that all persons within a society affect parent/child relations though their personal, family and citizenship decisions.

---Uses multi-concept thinking to determine what to do in addressing and solving complex parent/child concerns.

---Develops the intellectual, social and critical thinking skills needed to take deliberative, reasoned action regarding significant parent/child relations concerns on an individual, family, community and societal level.

Organization of the Parents and Children Course

Previously, a case has been made that the subject matter and the teaching approach of the Parents and Children course are different from the traditional or technical approach to content and teaching. Also, a case has been made that the Parents and Children course draws on several disciplines. In keeping with these changes, the Parents and Children course re-organizes knowledge around integrative questions of practical concerns of parents and children. This organization is assumed to be more meaningful to

students than previous course formats. First, the course deals with addressing and solving problems families face in everyday life rather than covering subject matter. This format capitalizes on existing interests and concerns of students. Because of this, the course is presented in a psychologically more comprehensible manner than the compartmentalized approach to disciplines. Furthermore, it is assumed that how a students uses what he/she knows it more imporant than what he knows. (Or, if the student can't use the knowledge, what good is it.) An attempt has been made to select significant continuing concerns of families in regarding parents and children to get at deep or root problems and concerns, versus the symptons. Also an attempt has been made to organize the course logically and so that it is psychologically assessible to students. No textbook. reference or outline exists for Parents and Children using this format. Therefore, a format was developed for the course. The next chapter outlines a rough draft of the format and course content of the Parents and Children.

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CHAPTER FOUR

SUGGESTED CONTENT FOR A PARENTS AND CHILDREN COURSE

Based upon the on-going concern of families in reference to parents and children and the student objectives outlined in Chapter Three, this chapter will further describe the suggested content for the Parents and Children course. This guide is designed to provide a sample of the curriculum content and instructional strategies that might be used with students to introduce them to the work of the family with regards to parents and children. In many instances, students may have taken a Middle School Family and Consumer Education course or have taken a course in high school such as Family, Food and Society: Family and Technology or Family and Jobs where the concept of work of family and the intellectual skill of practical reasoning have already been introduced. This guide attempts to build upon the previous guides and to provide a course format that is different so that students who have taken a number of these courses have an opportunity to investigate representative ideas in parents and children from a slightly different perspective.

Organization of Parents and Children Course

Five curriculum modules are provided. The first module is a mini module which introduces students to the representative ideas in the course. Since generating conceptual complexity is a key representative idea, all

components of the practical reasoning approach will be included in each of the following units.

The second module is a major unit and provides subject matter and intellectual skills related to parents and children within the personal/family setting.

The third module is related to parents and children and their concerns within the near environment/community setting. The school, child care provider, and workplace issues will be involved.

The fourth module deals with the concerns of parents and children on a societal/public policy level. Media, laws, policies and practices affecting parents and children on this level will be studied and ways that families can be proactive to affect these policies will be explored.

The fifth module is an independent study action module in which each student or small groups of students can investigate concerns on the near environment/community or societal/public policy level.

Rough Draft of Course Format

I. Module one: mini module (2 weeks)
   Preview of course related to the continuing concerns of family
   - A. Work of the family regarding parent/child relations and human development
   - B. Complexity of family and societal environment
   - C. Actions taken by parents and children

D. Different kinds of family action

E. Consequences of family action

F. Generating conceptual complexity as reasoned action

II. Addressing concerns of parents/adults and children within the family and personal settings (8-9 weeks)

A. Developmental levels and interactions of children and parents/adults involved

B. Societal conditions affecting family

C. Complexity of concerns

D. Actions taken and consequences of action

E. Generating conceptual complexity as reasoned action in addressing and solving concerns

III. Addressing concerns of parents/adults and children within the near environment/community settings (3 weeks)

A. Near envirnment/community settings i.e. neighborhood, child care provider, school, workplace

B. Complexity of concerns

C. Conditions and resources that can be supportive or deterimental to parents and children within these settings

D. Actions taken and consequences of action

IV. Addressing concerns of parents/adults and children within the societal context and public policy arena (2 weeks)

A. Social conditions affecting parents and children on a societal level

B. Public policy or lack of public policy which affects families and children

C. Actions that individuals and families can take that can improve or change conditions to make society more responsive to the needs of parents and children on a personal/family and community level.

V. Independent Study Action Module: Each student or groups of students investigate and take action regarding a near environment/community or societal/public policy concern related to parents and children.

Mini-Module Description

A rough sketch of the mini-module, module one, is given below. This sketchy outline needs to evolve further and to have input from the Parents and Children Advisory Committee. We had talked about the course format briefly in the June meeting, but the draft of the mini-module had not been developed at that time. This work will need to occur at the first advisory committee meeting in 1992-93.

Draft Objectives of Mini-Module

1. Experience the sense of confusion, being overwhelmed by current situation, current conditions, plight of family as related to parents and children

2. Clarify work of family in relation to parents and children and human development

3. Motive students for further study of concerns of parents and children within the family, near environment and society.

I. Concerns affect the work of the family related to parents and children

   A. Concern of family about parent-child relations arise within different contexts

      1. within family

      2. near environment/community/school/workplace

      3. society/public policy

   B. Impact significant because affects the family's ability to accomplish the work of the family, human development.

II. Complexity of concern

   A. Complexity results due to changes in family and societal environments

      1. Changing knowledge

      2. Knowledge explosion

      3. Concerns require knowledge and intellectual/

social skills to address and solve

4. Concerns and issues never solved for all time; reoccuring
5. People changing (growth, development, roles, skills)

III. Action taken by parents and children to respond to questions/concerns

1. Immediate reaction--based on prejudices, surface level thought
2. Simplify or reduce complex questions/concerns to simple technical questions of "how to"
3. Generate conceptual complexity to match complexity of situation (more reasoned action)

IV. General responses to complex questions about parents and children arise in everyday life involve different kinds of action.

1. Technical action
2. Communicative action
3. Critical reflective action

V. Consequences of family action

1. Sometimes solve problem/concern vs. create other problems
2. Might cause harm (psychological, social, physical) vs. benefit

VI. Generating conceptual complexity

1. Reasoned action
2. Skilled intellectual/social processes

VII. Overall, course focuses on learning/rediscovering/developing intellectual and social skills involved in addressing and solving the continuing concerns of family related to parents and children.

Detailed conceptual content outlines are provided in the chapters that follow. Included are directed activities for learners, and suggested resources for teaching and learning. Teachers will want to consider their present program characteristics and local needs in developing plans for creating and/or redirecting a Parents and Children course.

Appendix A

How do parents themselves feel about the quality of family life? In a Louis Harris national poll, half of adults feel that the quality of family life in this country has deteriorated. Three out of four say that the problems affecting children are worse today than when they were growing up; 60 percent agree that it is difficult to find enough time for their children (Harris, 1986). See Table III.

Table III

Parents' Attitudes Toward Children and Family Life

	Percentage Agreeing
Problems affecting children are worse than when I was growing up.	75%
It is a problem finding enough time to spend with children.	60%
Family life is worse than it was when I was growing up.	52%
Parents generally are doing a good job in giving their children values.	47%

Source: Louis Harris and Associates, Inc., 1986.

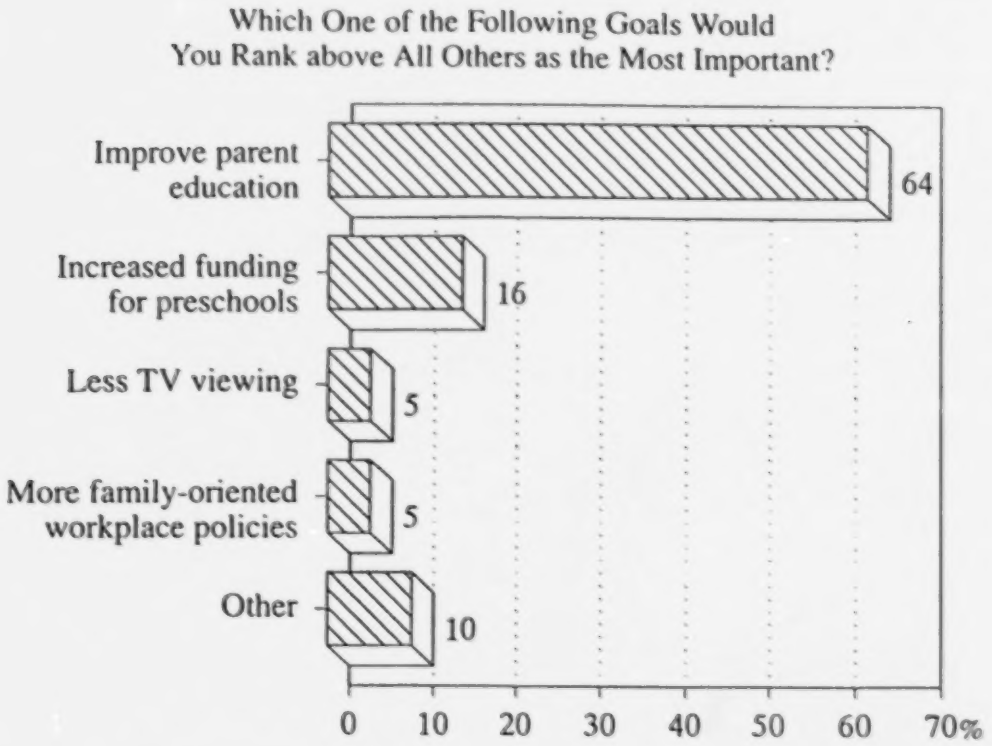
More recently, Ernest L. Boyer (1991), President of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, published a book *Ready to Learn : A Mandate for the Nation*. In the summer of 1991, The Carnegie Foundation surveyed more than seven thousand kindergarten teachers to learn about the school readiness of children.

They asked kindergarten teachers how well prepared their students were for formal education, focusing especially on physical well–being, social confidence, emotional maturity, language richness, general knowledge, and moral awareness—key dimensions of school readiness. They found that 35 percent of children, more than one in three, were

not ready for school, according to the teachers. In comparison with five years ago, 42 percent of teachers said that the situation is getting worse, and only 25 percent said that it is better. Wisconsin kindergarten teachers indicated that 32 percent of children were not ready for school.

In response to the question "What would most improve the school readiness of children?," the majority said "Parent Education" (p.7). In response to the ranking of the goal which above all others is most important, 64 percent of respondents indicated "improve parent education." See Figure III.

Figure III



Note: Other suggestions equalled 10 percent.

SOURCE: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, National Survey of Kindergarten Teachers, 1991.

In comparison to the national figures which one of the following goals would you rank above all others as the most important question, the Wisconsin figures are shown in Table IV:

Table IV

Comparison of National and Wisconsin Figures

Goals	National	Wisconsin
Improve parent education	64%	66%
Increased Funding for preschools	16%	13%
Less TV viewing	5%	4%
More family–oriented workplace policies	5%	6%
Better health services	1%	0%
Safer neighborhoods	2%	4%
Other	7%	8%

This points to the need for a Parents and child course at the high school level. A large percentage of students have no exposure to classes that would help them know what children are like, what is involved in caring for them, and how important parent–child relations to the development of healthy family member citizens.